



ISSUE #1 APRIL/MAY 2007

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## UK TALENT SPECIAL

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MEADOWS

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## LITTLE WHITE LIES

*Truth & Movies*

THE  
THIS IS ENGLAND  
ISSUE



**"WE'RE NOT RACISTS,  
WE'RE REALISTS...  
WE'RE NOT NAZIS, WE'RE  
NATIONALISTS... WE'RE  
THE TRUE VOICE OF  
THIS COUNTRY."**

COVER & PICTURE BY  
**PAUL WILLOUGHBY**

WRITTEN BY  
**MATT BOCHENSKI**



CHAPTER ONE

IN WHICH WE

DISCUSS

THIS IS ENGLAND

LECTURE BY  
Shane MacGowan  
STARRING Thomas  
Turpin, Eleanor  
Latham, and Chicago

Recording  
April 17, 2017

Shane Meadows' *This Is England* is a skinhead movie with brains and balls. It's a pulsating snapshot of racial tension and social decay. It's got passion and style, and it glowers out at you with simmering menace.



# He's an original, Shane Meadows, a dark poet of urban England, louring and lyrical.

He takes the chintz and chime of domestic life and hurls them into something else—something unfamiliar and threatening. It was there in the visceral violence of *Dead Man's Shoes*, and it's here, too, in the concrete-cement block where Shaun Fields will get his first, bitter taste of manhood.

Shaun (Thomas Turgoose) is Shaun's memory of his own childhood as an '80s skin, the ones who suffered the pettiest lookback of record unemployment and national resentment like a bat in the face.

Before, it was rude and rude boys, black and white skins side by side, the mad spirit of '80. There were the good old days, says Meadows, and he plunges into them, unashamed, proud even, of who he was.

Toots and the Maytals blasts out of the soundtrack as 19-year-old Shaun falls in with a gang of skinheads. He doesn't see it but Shaun is surrounded by the symbols of a divisive decade. His dad has been killed in the Falklands: a Pandora's box of patriotic violence, which, once unlocked seems to seep into the collective psyche. Walls are daubed with graffiti, an angry maniacally screaming "Maggie is a leech". The first Asian-owned shop has opened on the corner. ▼



Shaun is a lovely kid – he's got the wrong hair, the wrong jeans, he's bullied at school – and he crisscrosses a landscape in which, true to form, Meadows has found a stark, simple beauty: the way a tree casts a shadow on modified brick; the view from a concrete car park; the wintry magnificence of a rolling cow field.

He's got attitude to spare (don't be fooled by that angel face and those big round eyes. "Hiss off," are the first words out of his mouth) but there are holes in Shaun's life, one of which will be filled by Woody (Joe Oberg), an older, broader man who offers Shaun his first vision of family in the film.

With Woody's gang Shaun rules the swimming baths, plays football, hangs out with girls, goes 'hunting' in derelict houses. Like any youth sub, they're reactionary and aggressive, they're loud and they look different, but against our rising suspicion, these kids are bright. There's an intimacy to the way they treat each other. In a film in which role models and authority figures are thoroughly absent, that gang identity is a kind of therapy, an insulation against the anarchy of Thatcherite Britain.

**These scenes see Meadows at his most brash and brilliant. Visually, they confirm his place as one of the great British stylists,**

haunting the harsh social reality of Alan Clarke with the striking street energy of his hero, Spence. But it's the setting that gives you (though surely a lot of it was ad libbed) – for its hilarious clarity ("Would you like to suck my test?" asks Shaun, Shaun's girlfriend) and simple honesty ("This has been the best day of my life," says Shaun to Woody, reminding you that there's still a vulnerable boy beneath the new beard and braces.

But things change. Out of jail and into their own cages, Combo (Stephen Graham), an old mate of Woody's, a new breed of skinned. At a party he gives a racist account of his time inside, though little, a first-generation Jamaican immigrant, is in the room. There's no underplayed silence, amplified by a series of harsh, ungluing close-ups.

**The next day, in his dingy bed sit,**

Combo gives them the cat to arms. "This is a proper fight," he says, clanking a tin as the film is put, pick a side. Woody walks out Shaun stays, angry and confused. "I want to make my dog pregnant," he explains. If Woody allowed (surely, Combo offers masculinity, the brute appeal of simple truths. No other is seen-out to adulthood, to the world of violence that took his life.

The film gets visually darker; the red markers give way to the disorienting off noise of the UK Sub, as Combo takes Shaun and the others to a meeting of the National Front. This is our passport to the early world of white power politics, greasy fathers and the bedrooms of rural pain.

"We're going to revolutionise that ground and ward... England," says the suit to the skin, but at first there's a sense of debate to the way these kids play at being racist. They know poorly spelled graffiti is an underpin (Shaun just writes his name), they threaten Alan kids and rob the corner store. But it's not until the question of belly rubs to head again that the film finally explodes into its very moment of outright violence.

That it's Milly who takes a beating from Combo is predictable, but the circumstances are far from straightforward. They've been working toward, working toward, the early days (though there's something in the air, like a train heading down to zero) when Milly starts talking about his family. "What do you think makes a bad dad?" asks Combo, before giving him a savage kicking. ▼



But for all his swaggering, most rhetoric, Combo's no simple, blond skin. His hatred is really a nameless anger – all racism does is give it a label and a purpose: externalizing something that comes from deep within him. It's this Combo understands himself in terms he can deal with. There's a line between his eyes and maybe that's the only real thing about him.

## That's what you take away from *This Is England*; that sense of self-revelation.

It's the honesty to say, 'These are the things we did, this is who we were, and a lot of it wasn't very nice.' That's Meadows' responsibility, but he couldn't have done it without Thomas Turgoose. For all its expressive stylism and emotional subtlety, truth is *This Is England* would be nothing without Tommo. Everything turns on him, and he responds with a performance of staggering maturity.

In fact, in a film obsessed with fatherhood and masculinity, the film's real bond is between director and star. 'I could see myself in him,' Meadows said after filming Tommo at a centre for disadvantaged kids in Grimsby, where much of the location shooting took place. For his part Turgoose lives the role from the inside out. He's tender, vulnerable, cheeky, rude and heartfelt. At the end of the film, you learn that he suffered his own tragedy – *This Is England* is dedicated to his late mum – and while nothing can replace that loss, you know he's just taken a giant step towards a future.

What he and Meadows have left behind is a striking, nuanced, significant film, executed with an expertise that, right now, puts it way ahead of the rest of our home-grown hits. ■

Turn to page 26 for an exclusive interview with Thomas Meadows.



**Anticipation:** "That *This Is England*" suggested Thomas Meadows could become the next smiling British slice of his time. **Yay**

**Enjoyment:** Fresh, sharp, refreshingly stupid and naive, but also with the queasy, gelid certainty of London violence on the next stage. **Yay**

**On retrospect:** An extraordinary film – tender, expressive, bleak and brilliant. Thomas Meadows at the height of his power. **Yay**

# Good For The 'Goose

WE TALK TO  
BEHIND  
SUPERSTAR  
THOMAS  
YERGEN  
HONESTLY  
THE KID'S A  
LEGEND

**LHLias:** Hey Tommo, how's it going?  
**Tergoover:** Uh... okay, I guess

**Have you been at football practice this afternoon?**  
Football? No, Football's Mondays and Fridays.

**So how was school?**  
I haven't been to school either today. I've been pretty, I've not been very well.

**Did you have to take loads of time off school for filming?**  
Yeah, man weeks at the end of September 2003. Oh, 2003. No work. 2003.

**That's kind of a long time, was it a bit of a shock to have to do schoolwork again?**

No, really because I never used to go a lot - just an hour or two a day. Now I'm back full time.

**What do your mates at school make of you being in a film?**  
They're glad for me. They all say I'm lucky and wish they

could do it and that.

**What about the girls? Surely they're all fighting over you now?**  
No, not really.

**Have you planned a leg trip to see This Is England when it hits the cinema?**

No, we can't because it's on 18

**True, bit of a bummer. What about during filming - how did you find being the youngest on set?**

I was used to hanging around older guys, really. Like, like, really old. Like Jack O'Connell who plays Peter, and Jameson Henson who plays David, they were all sort of around the same age as the people I hung around with.

**Did they take care of you?**

Oh, a bit. They helped me with my lines and supported me if I needed any help.

**When it came to shooting scenes, did you have set lines or did Steve want you to improvise?**

They'd work it out like a script in front of us for the scene, and they'd, like, give us some lines to make our conversation around. Then we'd just make up our own lines.

**Who do you feel you get on best with when it came to improvising?**  
Probably Jo Hartley (Olympia, Steve's mum). She helped me the most. Like with my lines and things.

**What did she do?**

I used to go to her apartment in Nottingham and she'd help me with, like, things to say and how to express it.

**When you guys were running around the abandoned house, was that totally improvised too?**

Yeah, there just said, "mess the house up". So just went round kicking everything with, like, guns and bricks and everything.

**And how did you find that?**

It was kind of good, I enjoyed that.

**So, is that a regular day out for you and your buddies?**

Uh... no, not really.

**What was your favourite scene to film?**

Probably messing the house up, that was good.

**How long did you guys spend doing that?**

Oh, only one day. It was sort of a hunting day, where we all went messing about with guns and things...

**...and you basically just got to mess around?**

Yeah, basically.

**Do you feel that life has changed for you since making the film?**

Oh, yeah, it's changed a lot. It's watching television, I look at it in a different way now. Like, I look for mistakes on the screen and things. I look for scenes or scenes from the cinema and that. But yeah, I mean, the way I treat people in a bit better - my attitude.

**Why do you think that is?**

I don't know really. Before, people just wouldn't help me at all, they'd just, like, tell me to do my work and not speak to me.

**And how do you find answering stupid questions from stupid journalists?**

I find it a bit, uh, well, it's a bit boring. But I suppose you have to do it.

**How many interviews do you think you've had to do?**

Oh, loads. I can't even remember how many I've done. I've done loads.

**And after a while do you sit there and think, 'This is just stupid'?**

Yeah, it is a bit... Yeah, yeah, it is.

**Well, thanks Tommo, for speaking to another dumb journalist. Oh, you're alright. ■**

Check out [www.thefilmbox.co.uk](http://www.thefilmbox.co.uk) for the full transcript



from the director of *hustle & flow*

# BLACK SNAKE MOAN

SAMUEL L. JACKSON  
CHRISTINA RICCI  
JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE

15  
STRONG COARSE LANGUAGE  
AND SEX REFERENCES



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Paul Smith

"I want all your shoulders to get up on your feet  
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And give me some of that old moonshining!"

*Sammy, "Richard Montgomery"*

## CHAPTER TWO

IN WHICH WE

INTRODUCE OURSELVES

#### LW:les

What is it that you love about movies?

#### Shane Meadows:

What is it I love about movies? Yeah, let me think. What is it I love about movies? From my point of view, especially as I'm getting older, it's a chance.... We all know that we can go anywhere in the world and we can meet anyone we want to meet, but we're all basically lazy fuckheads. And film can take us anywhere and show us these things without us having to move. And that's why as you get older, when you're into film you start to get into more weird and wonderful things. I saw *The Death of Mr. Brown*, and it's like, when I saw it had I wouldn't have dreamt of seeing that, but it's a chance for a lazy pig to go and visit a better block? Obviously I adore film but I think the nature of it is that you're a watcher or a doer, and I'm definitely a watcher.

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## FOPP FILM CLUB

Wondering who at your movie have been on Tuesday nights? Come and join them at the Fopp Film Club, hosted by *entertainment* at the basement cinema of Fopp's flagship store on Tottenham Court Road. Which great movies for free (yes, you don't have to pay a penny), have a drink and maybe even meet the odd special guest. Our upcoming schedule looks something like this: it may change a bit, but it probably won't

April 3: *The Museum Men* Peter Page  
April 10: *Mad Men*  
May 1: *Fast Food Nation*

PLUS, A SPECIAL SCREENING:  
April 25: *This is England*  
with director Shane Meadows interviewing

For up to date information check out [www.foppmag.co.uk](http://www.foppmag.co.uk) or [www.fopp.co.uk](http://www.fopp.co.uk)



## READER SURVEY

Recently we asked a reader survey to our website to find out a little bit more about the kind of data that we brought *ENTERTAINMENT*. The results, in many cases, were alarming, and we have discovered much to be concerned about. In our readers, some of you did find it very difficult to actually return on the job after watching the 100th episode of *Doctor Who* for the age of 10. Some of you did not understand, grab *ENTERTAINMENT*, say it and then leave "like a legitimate criminal". Others put up their copies of the mag and use them in atmospheric architectural designs and the time with a lot of blood, sweat and tears.

But really we just needed to know what people thought we could make better about our humble publication. Here's some of the (partial) improvements you'd like us to make:

### ENTERTAINMENT

Get more like *entertainment* magazine. But much it's about that you want it's worth the price. I like the monthlies stuff. It makes the mag seem "fresh".

### More more pictures

I would add a small section displaying some photos from film.

### ENTERTAINMENT

More photos of the film series.

### More entertainment

The only thing I'd like to see is a complete page.

Make it a weekly - I read my *ENTERTAINMENT*.

More pages devoted to videogames. Free full-page.

I did notice a spelling mistake in the film issue on garbage just took a bit more care.

More reviews would be great, as there's never enough for me.

### Free PS3 each month

They are absolutely amazing.

Lists - better than lists.

More writing going on it's a target.

A few old ones become the art is excellent.

More reviews based on film.

A little more about what's happening in local art houses and not just what's happening in the London area. I like London's scene to more actively than it is.

A personal guide to the British scene. Why a whole page? It should be smaller.

Film club it came with a little about that would bring back a lot of the old stuff when it comes to the club.

More music and the magazine.

Let's continue in supporting the young filmmaker of the UK and around the globe.

I wouldn't object to a greater focus on the short film scene and a broader approach to the future of the medium and the place it is taking on.

Oh I don't! I'd quite like a... *entertainment*. You could have a free section on French film. I don't know if I don't want it to change.

Make the reviews a bit more interesting.

Free up of the French, more opening film features and more French film.

Like *entertainment*. I'm too old and moved to the French side of the internet.

More on cinema history please!

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IN CINEMAS ACROSS THE COUNTRY FROM APRIL 20

CHAPTER THREE.

IN WHICH WE DISCUSS

THEMES OF UNCOMMON

INTEREST

INSPIRERED BY

OUR FEATURE FILM.

# MADE IN ENGLAND

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It's not about statues. It's not about 'conquering America'. It's about England – our films, our talent, our shores. These are the people making it happen: the artists, visionaries, madmen and mavericks giving it some national front.

Words by

Chris Kemp, Clare Tolley, David Jackson, James Beckett, Mark Beckett

Photography by

Dean Rogers, Paul Willoughby, Sam Cheevers

# ORIGINAL SKIN

## Shane Meadows

"I'm not ashamed of being a skinhead."

Portrait by Dave Rogers



ack then," says Shane Meadows, "a rocker was a rocker, a mod was a mod, a punk was a punk, a skin was a skin. Put all of those different factions together and there'd be a no-nonsense fight."

It's not quite the vision of the good old days that you expect to hear from somebody reminiscing about the past, but Shane Meadows isn't any old somebody, and his past isn't your average story of jumpers-for-gunsports and home for tea.

"I've seen some terrible things over the course of the years," he admits. "Really horrific, unsettling violence. It frightens me, and what also frightens me is that sometimes I've felt that rage myself. I was witnessing things and saying things and doing things that I should never have been doing at that age."

His wilderness years as a young skinhead in Ulkeweler—the shit on the head of Thatcher's jackboot—are the basis for Meadows' latest masterpiece, *This Is England*, surely the film that confirms his place as our current anti-home-grown filmmaker.

It's a breeding take on an era that most people remember for Roland Rat and bad fashion—TOD's says that the film acknowledges, but which then give way to something altogether darker and more uncomfortable. Did as much as Meadows wants to prick our collective conscience, *This Is England* is a populative celebration of youth culture. ▼



"It's not like I'm ashamed of being a skinhead," he says. "The first time you go from being a shaggy-haired wimp to a sort of face around town, that pored and that empowerment is something that stays with you. It's like smoking for the first time underage—we've all done it, we've all been there, we've all felt the excitement of that."

But his experiences went a lot further than a dirty tag. Meadows was there when the National Front marched in on the skinhead scene, fracturing its traditional roots in black culture, and transforming it into something altogether more sinister.

But who do you blame for that? As Meadows points out, "as a young lad in a place where you were starting to think, 'Shit, there's nothing out there for me', it sort of perpetuated itself. You've got these people who were ready for a fight, and also looked ready for a fight, and the National Front used them as foot soldiers."

And yet that was never the whole story: "Skinheads were prime for the picking, but it wasn't a natural, foregone conclusion. All skinheads didn't go that way, the problem is that there are certain images that stay with people, and a skinhead with a 'Screwdriver' trilby sticking his middle finger up is more memorable in the press than a white and black skinhead playing pool in the youth club."

On the surface, Meadows still has some of that aversion from the old days, with his bald, scalped head and a great dome of a fringe like a second one forward just going to seed.

Not that you'd say it to his face. Watch his film—there's something a bit wrong about Shane Meadows. Anybody who dismisses Paddy Considine as a gas mask and an axe isn't the kind of guy you're going to grab with a churky, "Yeh, laddy, lose some weight!"

But when he starts to speak, you realise that you've got him all wrong. He's a home town boy in Shane, and if the closest Brummy accent doesn't give it away (is it Brummy? That could be the kind of thing that East Midlands got tricky about), the fact that he's barely strayed from his Nottingham base in five features certainly is.

For *This Is England*, Meadows and crew made the 20-city trip down the A46 to Grimsby, a bleak industrial wasteland (no offence) on the east coast of England. It was here that Meadows met Tomma Figueira, then a troubled 13-year-old, who gives a stunning performance as the director's alter ego, Shane Fields.

If anything, it's that ability to come performances from unknown actors that's made Meadows, as it's saved him from a reliance on the

kind of bigger British stars who could effect the focus of his films. Finding Tomma, he says, "was almost like this karma"—he spotted him in a casting tape he shouldn't even have been looking at, having at all but decided that Grimsby wasn't the place to shoot.

Grimsby aside, for the time being at least, Meadows has no plans to expand his geographical ambitions, certainly not to the capital. "I get a taste of London every time I make a film," he says, "and it tastes pretty bitter. I don't like that extremity of life. I've been down there working on the final stages of a film, and it always feels like I'm being torn away from home."

Doesn't he need to be in London, though? Isn't it crucial for any English filmmaker to be in the centre of things? Far from it. "If you think about the things that inspire my films, the areas that I'd have to live in London, they don't seem to exist anywhere. When I'm down at the British Legion in Litherley with me dad, or I'm wandering round Nottingham, you see and feel and hear people, and pick up on things that continue to inspire you. Down in London there's an anonymous quality to it—I think I'd run out of ideas pretty fast."

Besides, as much as he has an emotional attachment to Nottingham ("I really feel like part of the place, you know?"), there are practical reasons for staying put. "We've got saved studios and everything that I need to get things to a virtual finish line. And the worst thing, there's lots of young filmmakers to be excited about."

Is he concerned that the lure of London is threatening English filmmaking? That we're in danger of losing our regional voices, as filmmakers and audiences alike (professional and nonprofessionally) flake on a single city? Again, far from it. He points out that the distribution of cash among local funding bodies is making it easier for regional filmmakers to get hold of the financing they need to tell their stories, whereas in London there's a lot of all people chasing a limited pot of money. In fact, he says, "I would much rather be a new filmmaker in Sheffield or Nottingham or Manchester than I would in London because there isn't the mass of people to overshadow you. You can actually get your voice heard."

In Shane's case that voice is being heard loud and clear. It's the distinctive, defining, defining sound of one of our own—one of our best. "I do know that up and down the country there's probably never been a more fruitful time to be a filmmaker," he says. And if you want proof, well, look at him: you've found it. **MB**





# THE DAYTRIPPER

## Paul Andrew Williams

"I was desperate. I was pissed off after years of trying to get a film made."

Portrait by Sam Chelvanay



In 2006 there were two new British directors worth betting on: the pretty peppers and Woodpecker fan. One of them was Andrea Arnold, for her dream-filled opus on the culture of surveillance, *Red Heat*. The other, whose hugely accomplished *London to Brighton* appeared like a short, sharp, grime-encrusted shot as the year drew to a close, was Paul Andrew Williams.

While many critics hastily played their 'bright new hope for British cinema' card when Arnold walked away with the Jury Prize at the Cannes Film Festival, few would have predicted that it would be trumped by an astonishing low-budget drama about homelessness, prostitution and paedophilia in southern England.

Where did *London to Brighton* come from? "A fluke," Williams suggests modestly, then corrects: "Obviously there was some thought and direction behind it. I've made shorts and stuff and have been trying to get a film made for quite a while. I just got so frustrated seeing that I wrote this film over a weekend."

Williams, a globing actor-cum-shorts director with a hankering to go feature length was, at one point, your typical Angry Young Man. With the budgetary cal-de-secs and discomfiting lack of faith currently rife in British cinema's funding bodies, Williams decided that taking a practice stanza would be better than dancing for some nothing in a BHS suit whose artistic group begins and ends with Richard Curtis.

"I started writing on a Friday and kept going and going and going. I had the idea a week or so before, so I worked out a rough plotline in my

head and channeled it out. It was one of those things where, being a writer, I was just, you know, in the mood. But at the same time I was desperate. I think I was so pissed off after years of trying to get a film made that I just had a lot of energy to focus on getting it done. It was difficult for a first-time filmmaker."

Savily his short films, including *It's Okay to Drink Whiskey*, about an elderly woman reflecting on the good old days from the safety of her local laundrette (Mike Leigh eat your heart out), and *Loyalty*, upon which *London to Brighton* is based, would have helped light the way for Williams' move into feature filmmaking? "I think it's a route for you to learn how to make films, but I don't think it's a great way to make a movie. I made loads of shorts and they got people saying that they like your style and they like what you're doing but, personally, I don't think they'll get you a film."

So Britain, it seems, isn't the greatest place in the world for getting films made. That's not to say that the talent and the equipment isn't top notch, but Williams believes that things will only start to recover when funding bodies become more willing to take risks. "It's easier to make films with digital cameras, but I don't think Britain embraces independent film in the same way that America does, or even the rest of Europe. I don't know in *well* but on the subject but I know that in England, if you say you're doing a low budget movie, people often scoff at you. The chances of you being taken seriously are very slim, whereas a lot more independent films in America got made, many of which are successful. It's very difficult to get films made and to be taken seriously in England." **DA**

# LONDON CALLING

## Danny Dyer

"I'm just a peasant out of East London."

*Portrait by Sam Christman*



He went to play a king," says Danny Dyer. "I'd love to play an ambassador, a posh boy or something to really freak people out, but I don't really get things like that. I'm just a peasant out of East London."

A cynic might wonder if Danny Dyer, professional cockney wide boy, plays up to his rough diamond image, but he seems genuinely unaffected. He was spotted, aged 14, by a casting agent for *Prime Suspect 3*. In 1999, at the age of 19, he got his first feature role as Maff in *Human Traffic*.

The effects were pretty instant. "After *Human Traffic* I'd just get cars who'd give me drugs. One line of coke with me and they'd be happy and on their way. It's weird to think, 'Do you let them down? Do you say no?' You have this responsibility."

Dyer is honest that he was saved from "a real dark period when I couldn't get any work" by Rick Love, who cast him in each of his first three features, *Goodbye Charlie*, *Dragnet*, *The Football Factory* and *The Business*, all films that cover the same theme of insouciance.

"We're very obsessed with men, we're very interested in men loving each other in a straight way, the way men belly each other and gasp and slug their mate off. He likes to make controversial films. He wants people to have a fucking opinion on it, whether they love it or fucking hate it. What he knows is if people watch it and go to *Prize Express* and just forget about it."

While Love's patronage has given Dyer exposure, it's also meant he's only been seen in limited roles, playing characters who don't seem that far removed from his own personality. Is he really acting?

"I'm not playing myself, but the clever actor is bringing out the best parts of himself and putting them into a role. That's what acting is about, whether you can change your accent or not, it's you."

This year sees the release of another Dyer/Love collaboration, *Outlaw*, and Den Reed's *Straitheads* in which Dyer stars with Gillian Anderson. Both offer him roles that should broaden his appeal, but the films also seem strikingly similar, they're about ordinary people driven to seek vigilante justice. Dyer rejects the comparison. *Outlaw*, he says, "is about, 'What if someone were to do something really horrific, and the law failed you and you were put in a room with a fucking baseball bat, could you actually fucking smash him across the head?' *Straitheads*, he reckons, is just "a really fucked up love story."

Whether or not these films reflect a national malaise, Dyer reads little evidence to point a dark song picture of Britain. He talks about a 13-year-old boy who was shot in his area, "I know little fuckers when I was growing up, but no one would ever do anything like that", paedophilia ("it's rife now, and our punishment for that is giving them 18-month prison sentences on a segregated wing"), his concerns for his children, and the downside of his increasing recognition.

"I've got kids waiting outside my house. That pisses me. I've had my dustbin rolled, they've gone through my rubbish, I've woken up with eggs on my door. Why? They just throw the eggs and fuck off home, don't even wait for the reaction. What are you doing? That's a fucking great onelette."

What is there to look forward to this year, then? "The one thing I do love about this job is nothing's set out, you don't know what might be around the corner. It might be fuck all. I might get no fucking work. But I've got two films coming out this year that I'm really proud of so I can't ask for more than that. Maybe just good health, love and happiness." **JB**





# THE SUNDANCE KID

## Garth Jennings

"Things have gone well for us because we're done it at home, on our own terms, and that's what we intend to go on doing."

*Portrait by Paul Willoughby*



Two years ago, director Garth Jennings was enthusiastically taking up *Son of Rambow*, a script that he and producing partner Nick Goldsmith had been developing for years. Riding high on the success of their debut feature, *The Hot Chick*'s *Guide to the Galaxy*, the two men felt the time was right to make their 1980s-set story of two youngsters so inspired by Sylvester Stallone's macho ramp *First Blood* that they set about trying to make their own version of the action epic. Garth and Nick planned to assemble funding through their production company Hammer & Tongue, make the film independently and take it to Sundance to secure distribution.

Out to February 2007 and they've done just that – *Son of Rambow* was endorsed by critics and audiences alike at America's premier indie market, triggering a bidding war that eventually saw the film sold to Paramount Vantage for \$7 million, the largest acquisition of the festival.

Garth is, understandably, amazed by how well it's all gone. "It took off like a rocket for us," he explains from his bungalow office in north London. "We only finished it a week before it was due to screen, and we'd seen it so many times we couldn't judge if it was any good. Then to have 1,200 Americans suddenly watching it was bloody nerve-wrecking. But five minutes in we realised it was going down pretty well. Then halfway through it was extraordinary and by the end it was just the most glorious reaction we could have hoped for."

So what's it like for two English guys with a small UK film to be at the centre of an international bidding war? "I don't know because I wasn't

there for that. All the distributors came back to our condominium and I thought they'd have lots to sort out and nothing was going to happen soon so I went upstairs to bed. Then I woke up very early because of the jet lag, checked my texts, and Nick had sent me a lovely message saying, 'Congratulations, you've just sold to Paramount.' So I came down and made everyone coffee."

While they were pleased with the sale of the movie, neither Nick nor Garth went overboard with the celebrations. "You kind of have this image that if you were to do well, you'd be lifted up onto someone's shoulders and carried through the streets, but all you end up doing is eating your breakfast and lunch, having some meetings and going home again. As far as that perception goes, I think it's quite different from what's written about. I mean, Nick and I work on a barge, and since getting back from the States we've spent the last two days moving boxes around – that's the reality of what we do some days."

But with Paramount talking about releasing *Son of Rambow* worldwide this summer, won't the boys be tempted to weigh anchor and set sail for the glitz and glamour of Hollywood? "People said that after *Hitchhiker's*, but we have no intention of moving anywhere – certainly not to Hollywood," explains Jennings.

"We wouldn't survive five minutes there because it's such a different lifestyle. I have a family, Nick has a family, and there's no way we're taking them to California. Half the reason we do what we do is because we like doing it here. British crews are great, and one of the reasons things have gone well for us is because we've done it at home, on our own terms, and that's what we intend to go on doing." CT

# NORTHERN SOUL

## Jodie Whittaker

"I had to act a lot of stuff in *Fences*,  
but I didn't have to act where I was from.  
I knew that inside out."

Portrait by Sam Claiborne



Jodie Whittaker is a total bitch. "A cat," she's demanding, "a cat to the Royal Court." Here we go, the 34-year-old starlets in fall-on-due mode. So she's got some Irish-dish theatre appointment. Big deal! Sure, she's on top of the world right now, but soon the ego and the drugs will kick in, and before you know it she'll be shoving back to earth like a meteor.

Except, it didn't happen exactly like this. It was more like, "A cat? To the Royal Court?" And after that, "That'd be amazing, is that allowed? I've got a hole pass."

Truth is, Jodie Whittaker—impossibly young, talented and fresh-faced—is a bit of a legend. She talks 10 to the dozens, and has an endearing habit of apologizing when she swears ("Me mum'll kill me!"). She worries about being misquoted ("I've never asked my opinion on that!"), and doesn't really want to be famous ("I can't imagine being chased down the street by someone with a camera. I'd be like, 'Fuck off! Oh, sorry'"). She's honest and fiery and cuts as a butter.

It turns out that this theatre business is quite the story. She got a call the day before asking her to fill in for Tim Spall, the Chekov masterpiece getting great reviews with Kristin Scott Thomas and Mackenzie Crook. "Gruut," you'd think, "stroke of luck." Only they wanted her that night. After a couple of hours familiarizing herself with the stage, she went on to perform, script in hand. "I was broken," she says, understandably.

That's the other thing about Jodie: she's Northern. And not just Northern as in, "from the North." No, Jodie Whittaker is gloriously, unashamedly, properly Northern. Through and through.

No doubt that helped when it came to winning her breakthrough role as the object of Peter O'Toole's geriatric affections in *Venus*. After four grueling auditions she was cast as Jessica, a tough-as-Northern-bird from the Wicky Pollard school of style. "I had to act a lot of stuff in *Venus*," she

says now, "but I didn't have to act where I was from. I knew that inside out."

On its release, the word most often used to describe Jesse was "chav," a lay term which, you suspect, is code for working-class. How does Jodie feel about the label? "It's rude. If you were to say another term that was as politically incorrect, everyone would jump on you." So why don't they? "That's our stereotype, isn't it?"

Jessie is different, she explains. "I get frustrated that we're drilled down to think that only pretty people can fall in love. That really pisses me off. Why do you have to be really pretty? Why do you have to be working in a really good job? This girl that in every other film is the trouble maker comes in, and she doesn't have to be any different to be loved."

This sense of challenging stereotypes is something else that Jodie doesn't need to act. She's the first to admit that she's from a comfortable, middle-class background, well-travelled and educated—her dad still helps pay the rent. But she knows that's not how people see her. "With any accent, people are automatically like, 'Oh, do you work down [pit]?' I get frustrated with that." And there are other consequences. "When people talk about your background and they make it sound really humble, that's not cool to people who know that I've had it quite easy. My mates who haven't had it easy are like, 'Fuck off, Jodie.' There's a presumption that, because I speak like this, I must have had it hard."

That's especially galling, you realize, once you get her onto her pet subject. "I'll tell you one thing that I really hate—why is it cool to have had it hard? I went backpacking and I'd meet people and say, 'How did you get here?' At first it's all, 'I worked me fuckin' ass off!' And then they're like, 'Actually, me, did bought me ticket.' Well why didn't you just say that?" The soldier, she explains, is for everyone to listen to "Common People" by Pulp, "the best song ever written".

But there's another matter even more pressing, and it can't wait any longer. Peter O'Toole—hat or no! "That as hell," she says without a moment's hesitation. "He's gorgeous. Absolutely gorgeous." **MS**





# ✻ BRING ME SUNSHINE ✻

## Danny Boyle

*"I can't be a nice guy, because in order to get somewhere you have to jettison everybody."*



It's ruined my life, this film. I've lost friends. It's just ruined my life." Danny Boyle is talking about his latest slice of genre magic, *Sunshine*. And he's not nearly as apologetic as his words would suggest.

With a wicked grin, the veteran director behind *Trainspotting* and *28 Days Later* reveals he's just asked the *Blair* press office if he could tell us what he really feels, and was told to "be positive." Throwing caution to the wind he goes on, "But I have to be honest, it's ruined my life. So it better work."

We're sure the film, and to ensure its director, it does work. Boyle can now count himself among the handful of British directors to pull off the coup de grace that is the successful sci-fi film. Set 50 years in the future, Boyle's many fans will not be surprised to learn that *Sunshine* maintains the director's ongoing fascination with what he describes as "bizarre, cinematically rich scenarios."

The film's premise (as devised by another Brit hero, Alex Garland) is that our dying sun is set to be rejuvenated in spectacular fashion by a team of eight astronauts armed with a nuclear bomb. So much for plot—what's the real story for Boyle? The director explains, "What it's really about—what I hope it's about, anyway—is what it is like for men to come face to face with the source of all creation. It doesn't get much bigger than that." It's a typically ambitious theme for a man who has, within his body of work, tackled drug addiction, kidnapping, love, zombies, Thailand and Leonardo DiCaprio.

While his themes may be grand or grotesque, in person Boyle is surprisingly unassuming, with an infectious enthusiasm for ideas, exploring avenues of thought and go nearly sharing what is evidently a

gut-level passion for getting the most out of life, whatever the hurdles.

Remembering the *Sunshine* shoot, Boyle talks about the challenges of his hermetically sealed set, explaining how at this point in his career he decided to take on the challenge of a closed spaceship, which runs contrary to his usual method of working. "Bartolucci expresses this wonderful sentiment that when you're making a film you should always leave a door open for real life to walk in, which is something I really believe in, for those happy accidents, those gifts that are presented to you by nature, by people, they just turn up. But you can't do that with this film."

Indeed, Boyle exploded the claustrophobia, making the cast live together in close quarters a spartan barracks prior to filming, a hard-nosed tactic that harks back to the authoritative subtext of the '70s. "Ang Lee once said, 'Directors are not nice people,'" he remembers, "and he's absolutely right. I can't be a nice guy, because in order to get somewhere you have to jettison everybody and just push and push and push. It's terrible."

Nevertheless, as a director who attracts repeat business from actors of the calibre of Ewan McGregor and Gillian Murphy, he must be doing something right. Ultimately, Boyle reckons a stubborn streak never hurt a filmmaker, revealing the difficulties he experienced even over something as apparently simple as the title *Sunshine*.

"The studio were worried people would think it was a romantic comedy or something." The recent natty director in town sighs, exasperated. "When you know the film, you love the title. You think that's the right title, not *Mission to the Sun*, or *Sun Mission*, or whatever. You have to be stubborn. It's *Sunshine*."

He signs off with a note of weary, mischievous pessimism. "I will never make another film like this." Or, whenever he goes near it, apparently limited only by the scope of his ambition. **CB**

# LAND AND FREEDOM

## Andrew Kötting

"There is something about British culture that is incredibly seductive."

Portrait by Sam Claessens



ased in St Leonards on the south coast of England, Andrew Kötting is one of the most interesting and impulsive artists working in the UK today. Inquisitive, laissez-faire and ferociously independent, his work draws upon a number of influences – most of which are regularly unrecognisable – and often manages to locate an ironic spiritualism in the profane aspects of landscapes both physical and cerebral. As a sculptor, cartoonist and video artist, he has produced two distinctive feature films to date.

The first was 1997's *Galveston*, a lyrical one-postcard and wistfully ironic celebration of Britishness in which the director accompanies his elderly grandmother and speech-impaired daughter on a whistle-stop tour of the coastline. His second, *This Filthy Earth* (2001), is loosely based on John's La Torre, and it more than achieves its desire to get down to the "spunk and bones" of rural communities.

Kötting has just returned from an early-morning swim in the sea for what he describes as, "This blank canvas which allows you to relax and reflect and contemplate!" "There must be about a dozen islands in and about St Leonards who will swim at the year round," he says.

Incidentally, the sea assumes one of the main roles in his most recent short, *Offshore Galveston*, in which he, his brothers and some friends decide to swim the English Channel to France. "My brother lives down here and we'd often chat about doing it at some point. I started preparation and the first thing I did was Google the words 'cross channel swim'. A boat called *The Galveston* came up. For me, that was enough."

Kötting admits that there is an element of serendipity to the way in which he works, where random sights and sounds inform the direction of a project and the development of an idea. "It's subconscious, I suppose. We're allowed and we're all very sensitive to the things

happening around us. I've always got a plethora of projects bubbling along and you wait for some kind of connectivity. Sometimes, things just all make sense. You become sensitive to what I call 'legendary spatiality'. It's a very sculptural way of making work, but it means being reactive to things that pop up."

Often tagged a "psychogeographer" (someone who studies the effects of the geographical environment on the emotions and behaviour of individuals), Kötting's work tends to offer reflections upon landscapes and locations. "London was the place where I was born and bred. I moved to France and started spending time in the Pyrenees, and soon developed this yearning to reflect back upon things from England. We found we could get The Archers on short-wave radio, and it was then that I started to enjoy all the idiosyncratic and anachronistic delights in British culture that we take for granted."

Although Kötting has plied his trade on both sides of the Channel (his next film will be produced in France with European money) that won't put an end to his love affair with the British way of life. "There's something about the British culture that is very ineffable, something incredibly seductive about a city that is permanently in flux. When you go to the coast, however, it's almost as if things are getting washed to the edges with the tide. For whatever reason, that's where the idea of something that is British – an incredibly vague term – becomes a lot more seductive and a lot more interesting."

"It's like you're floating out. The longer I spend being away from Britain, the more interested I become in living in it. When you're more sensitive towards these things your ears and your eyes become really honed in on things like letterboxes, phone boxes, lampposts, Telly signs and tellypop ladies – the lot goes on. All that stuff we take for granted as British iconography. When it's part of a bigger project, it's so easy to weave it into the fabric of a piece of work." **BJ**





# ❖ HEY...JUDE? ❖

## JJ Feild

*"We spend all our time worrying about what other people think, but I think we need to go 'Fuck off' to everybody."*

*Portrait by Sam Chelvanay*



Just there's this quote. And it's about the gay sitting opposite. It could be complimentary. But sure: "What is it?" he asks. It's from a review of *Last Orders*, the film in which he played the younger version of Michael Caine. It's a disclaimer: "JJ Feild is like Jude Law's look gorgeous but equally magnetic younger brother." Does that sum up his unique appeal?

"I've got a better one," he says. "I was meeting the heads at 20th Century Fox to discuss a movie – I didn't even know what that meant, namely you just beg and do auditions. But one of the chief execs at Fox goes, 'Well, you know who you remind me of?' You're like a younger, gentler version of Jude Law." But that's pretty cool, right? Yes could be a younger, gentler version of, say, Rick Manning. "I'm just hoping Jude Law's going to do a film with a goody younger brother," he laughs.

JJ Feild as...well...just who he is as JJ Feild? "In the States I've had people say I've got the biggest CV of any 'unknown' actor they've ever seen," he admits. After *Last Orders* in 2000 came a supporting role opposite Harrison Ford in 2002's Jackie & Rita. The *Melrose Place*, followed by a string of costume dramas on UK television.

But that's not the whole story. The last three years have seen constant experimentation, a sort of avant-garde period making the kind of films that even he hasn't seen yet. There's been a multimedia trilogy for maverick director Peter Greenaway, a Dogme film in Buenos Aires, and again he's off to China and Argentina to shoot a manga adaptation. Controversial Israeli drama *Oliver Stone* is out in the States came May. JJ Feild has been seriously busy, but doesn't he worry that doing these sorts of films might have been a mistake? You don't see Jude Law straggling around in a jungle without make-up and lighting. "I think maybe the commercial side looks differently at you," he admits, "but you learn your craft. I certainly feel that there's a reason for doing these smaller

films, because if that huge whopper came along now, it wouldn't faze me – I'd love it and I'd embrace it."

Though born in the States, JJ is a British passport holder, and his recent still bears the traces of a London upbringing. He's well placed to assess the state of the UK film scene, especially with how it compares to Hollywood. "America is very ganglio and brash," he reckons. "I did one movie where they were trying to get everybody to do jumping jacks and press-ups every morning, and all the English actors just stood at the back smoking cigarettes."

What of UK film, though? Everyone seems to be full of optimism at the moment, what's the take? "I think we do make good films," he says, "but we need to start branching out more. I'd like to see the British film industry tackling world issues. We spend all our time worrying about what other people think, but I think we need to go 'Fuck off' to everybody. I'd be ace to see some totally leftfield new stuff."

He puts the problem down to the difficulties of distribution – "Our cinemas are crisscrossed full of foreign crap because we're flooded by the American distributors. I think we should be promoting British film in a much braver way."

What about BAFTA? Isn't it their job to get out there and support new British film? If so, why were people like *Oliver Stone* up for the Rising Star Award this year? Well, BAFTA, 2002 would like its name back, please, and why are the awards themselves so insufferably smug? There's a pause ("I'm trying very hard not to slag off my colleagues and never work again") but JJ thinks he has the answer. "Have you ever been to the Scottish BAFTAs? Every table has a bottle of whisky on it, and they heckle if they don't like whoever wins. They're rathless. It means that the people who are voting are too nervous to give political awards." More summing awards season violence? Sounds good to us. **WB**

# MOVIES AND MEMORY

## Terence Davies

"When I think about it now,  
I was incredibly privileged."

Portrait by Sam Claiborne



**D**istant Voices, *Sol Lee* (1988) is the feature debut of British director Terence Davies, and it's one of the greatest films produced on these shores. Its work rate – the his films – remains slow and stately, due mainly to the fact that he never panders to the mainstream market. He has written and directed ten features since 1988, including *The Long Day Closes* (1992), *The Neon Bible* (1995) and *The House of Mirth* (2000), all of which can be revisited at a retrospective of his work at the BFI Southbank during April.

But it's that debut which lingers. Its film is poetic verse, a collage of memories pertaining to the emotional existence of himself, his brother, his two sisters and his mother under the iron fist of their domineering father. True to the nature of memory, it doesn't have a narrative as such, it's more a mosaic of poignant of ethereal tableaux that flawlessly capture the mood, spirit and local colour of Liverpool during the period.

The partially, episodic style in which all his films have been made has for singles him out as a true original.

Davies started making films in the late '70s, producing three shorts for the BFI film board which have since been edited. The Trilogy "I went to Coventry drama school in 1973 because I wanted to write and act," he explains. "I'd written the first part of *The Trilogy* but I couldn't tell you where it came from – it just came to me. I sent it all over England and everyone turned it down so I thought it wasn't any good. I heard the BFI had a production board, and it was Mahmud Hasan who was responsible for getting me money for that."

In the spirit of the film, what are his memories of making *Distant Voices, Sol Lee*? "No those memories of that part of my life were so weird," he replies, "and I knew that was what I wanted to do. I wrote *Distant Voices* first, and once we'd shot it I realised that there was another part to it. At one point they were going to put it on the festival circuit and it wouldn't have got a cinematic release. By this time, Cole McCabe had taken

over at the BFI and they commissioned a second part, so I wrote *Sol Lee* over the following two years. We put it together and it did very well at Cannes."

Cinema became important to Davies at an early age and, although he says it didn't inform his style, it did enable him to see his childhood in a cinematic light. "It's very difficult to talk about your own style when it's relative to you. There were obvious influences when my father died, my sister took me to the pictures at the age of seven to see *Singin' in the Rain*. That was a huge influence. I was taken to see most musicals because my sisters loved them, but I was also influenced by the great comedy serial we had in this country up until the late '50s.

"There were other influences too – during the very early '60s we got our first television, and I saw Alec Guinness read the whole of T.S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* from memory. I didn't understand them but, for me, they were revelatory as they concerned the nature of time, memory and mortality. I read out and bought them, and I read them once a month. Like *The Sun Also Rises*, they're my great templates."

As Davies points out, it's difficult to imagine a film like *Distant Voices, Sol Lee* being commissioned today, mostly because financial outlets are far more stringent about the flow of cash. Indeed, his latest venture, a screen adaptation of Lewis Grassie Gibbon's 1932 Scottish novel *Sandwich Song* has currently hit a funding rough patch.

"When I think about it now," he offers, "I was incredibly privileged. No one would let you wait two years to write a second part of a film now. In fact, no-one would commission *Distant Voices, Sol Lee* now. It just wouldn't happen. The BFI production board was totally unique and its destruction was an act of gross cultural vandalism. It gave everybody the chance to make the film that they wanted to make without having to account for American tastes." **DJ**

A season of Terence Davies' films can be seen at the BFI Southbank from April 16 – May 12, and *Distant Voices, Sol Lee* put released on April 20. [www.bfi.org](http://www.bfi.org)





# QUEEN VIC

## Vicky McClure

"We needed a film that everybody's going to go mental about."

Portrait by Sam Chelmswey



Vicky McClure is an evangelist for *This Is England*. "I personally think that it's something British cinema needed," she says. "I know that sounds like I'm really begging it up loads, but I seriously do. I think we needed a gritty film like this that everybody's going to be going a bit mental about."

McClure was born in 1983, the year *Spin Bongo* retired, scabbits became compulsory, Gandhi won eight Oscars (like film, not the award), and the year in which *This Is England* is set. She plays Lol, girlfriend to the loveable Woody, and unrequited love of racist Combo, whose release from prison divides the gang. Was it difficult to immerse herself in an era she saw from a prison?

"The actual era was different for many people. Shane saw it from that point of view, whereas there might be people who watch the film and say, 'It was nothing like that when I was a skinhead or when I was growing up in 1983. We had to take it from Shane's experience because it was his story he was telling'."

McClure and boyfriend Andrew Skirrow (also pictured), whom she met when auditioning for *Meadows: A Room for Romeo Brass*, were cast in *This Is England* largely because of their close friendship with the director. "When we was in the pub one night he said, 'I'm thinking about this film that I'm maybe going to make. There's a possible role in there for you.' He said, 'Yeah? Well just play it by ear.' We never thought that much of it 'cos his ideas come and go."

McClure says that the film was "hurried" by *Meadows*, describing his working methods as informal yet dedicated, he took a relaxed attitude to casting and scripting but was directly involved in every process – from

guiding his actors with personal anecdotes to editing it himself.

"He was Tommy, so to speak, and we were Shane's friends. He would say, 'This is how Lol would be', and give you a line type, and you would make your own character. He gives you so much room to do that."

In fact, the most difficult experience of the film for McClure seems to have been knowing her hair shaven off, a prospect that had her wailing up in tears. "I thought it was a practical joke because Shane is known for doing practical jokes, and to that severe point: I said, 'I just want a full skinhead', but got a big bowl-thing with a rat tail at the back." What producer Mark Huxford strategically didn't tell the actors was that the film's financing was far from in place when they all had their heads shaved: it could have been for nothing. Perhaps then we'd have seen some real-life skinhead violence.

The film is bound to cause a certain controversy for its portrayal of racism in England, and for its honest, if often comical, depiction of kids drinking, taking drugs, and having their first fumbles with the opposite sex. McClure says that, apart from making people question contemporary racism, any controversy would be negligible, as the film isn't showing anything that doesn't happen today.

"I wouldn't say there's much difference in some ways: gangs get together, they sit around, have a split, have a drink, have a laugh, go out. That's still going to happen and that will happen for many generations to come."

"When I first watched the film I thought, 'Oh my god, it's a beautiful film.' But it's actually really dark and gritty. Sometimes when you watch certain films it's very pretty, but I think Shane said, 'We're not trying to hide anything.' It's just that *This Is England*." **BB**

# HANDMADE'S TALE

## Antony Rufus Isaacs

"You can do anything if you really want to — there's so much talent in this country."

Portrait by Sam Claiborne



everybody loves a comeback. After years in the wilderness, HandMade Films, creator of classic British movies like *Withnail & I*, *Rise and Fall* and *The Long Good Friday* is re-open for business and making up for lost time.

The company was founded by ex-British George Harrison in 1979 to finance Melly Pythou's *Life of Brian*. The film was a monster success, kick-starting a decade-long run of hits that ended with the disastrous release of *Cold Dog Soup* in 1990. Perhaps fittingly, HandMade dissolved into a kind of Pythonesque farce of recrimination and lawsuits, before being sold to a Canadian company. Now it's back in British hands and looking forward to the future.

HandMade has been described as "a hero of the British film industry," an assessment with which MD, Antony Rufus Isaacs, wholeheartedly agrees: "When I was a kid, it was a company making the greatest films," he says. "They're such an important part of the history of the business." Isaacs is now in control of the remake and exploitation rights to some great films, and he's not going to be shy about exercising them. *The Long Good Friday*, one of the all-time great British gangster movies starring Bob Hoskins and a young Pierce Brosnan, is in the frame for an update. Does he recognize the dangers in revisiting these much-loved classics? "I think that to try and do remakes and that sort of stuff is counter-productive," he admits, "but we're a public company and we have to be fiscally responsible, so we're talking about it."

It's a potentially dangerous path. So far we've managed to avoid the play-safe mentality of the American studios, where sequels and remakes are churned out with little regard either for the original movies or the expectations of the fans. Is Isaacs setting a worrying precedent? He doesn't think so: "I don't think we would ever remake the original film. But there is a way of doing it that won't offend people, and will leave the original intact." Besides, although we may see re-packages of other catalogue titles, not all of them will get the remake treatment — "To me," says Isaacs, "something like *Withnail* is a sacred cow."

Given its past troubles, it's understandable that the new HandMade will be a balance between creativity and pragmatism. It's evident in Isaacs' attitude towards America, which he doesn't think is having a destabilising effect on our industry: "The American market is a very important market. If you take the American money out of a budget I think it's extremely difficult [to get films made]. All the films we've got going forward have American distribution. It's essential."

Alongside updates to the back catalogue, these future projects include an original biopic of David Sterling, founder of the SAS, and *Class in Peru*, based on the hugely popular kids' series. Well, hugely popular in the States at least, another example of the company's trans-Atlantic focus.

Yet, despite the difficulties, Isaacs is adamant that the UK industry is in rude health: "You can do anything if you really want to," he declares, "there's so much talent in this country. I mean, a lot of it lies in Hollywood, but once they grow up, they come back."

Isn't it a problem, though, that, sooner or later, we lose all our best people to the US? Worse, that we get all lippy about "our boys" (and girls) concerning America? Then, just because they crop up in big time blockbusters like *Harry Potter* and *James Bond* we go around crying that British films. It's a bit embarrassing, isn't it? Again, Isaacs disagrees: "I don't think it matters. I think where the money comes from is completely immaterial. Look at *The English Patient* or *The Constant Gardener* — they're so populated by British talent that they become British films."

He's honest enough to admit that the goal of HandMade is to make commercial, "middle-of-the-range" productions, but he believes the opportunity is there "to make fantastically good films". Nor is Isaacs intimidated by the company's past, indeed, he points to the wealth of experience now at their fingertips, "We know how the game goes," he says. "I see myself in HandMade today as being in film financing rather than film producing. I'd much prefer to get terrific talent in the shape of directors and producers coming to me with a project that they want to do, then we can run it. We've got a lot of experience in that." **MB**



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# RED OR DEAD.

WORDS AND INTERVIEWS BY MATT BOCHENSKI  
ILLUSTRATION BY PHILLIP GRIDWOOD

FORGET FLOWER POWER AND BED-INS. THE 1980S WAS THE MOST POLITICALLY RADICAL DECADE IN ENGLAND'S POST-WAR HISTORY. WE MEET THE PEOPLE WHO MADE THE HEADLINES.

We've been called 'a threat to democracy', 'more consumers than citizens'. Voter turnout among 18-34-year-olds is, we're assured, a national scandal, and apparently we're to blame.

Statistics prove that we're the most apathetic political generation since the First World War. MTV, you see, has addled our brains, advertisers have fattened our egos and giant corporations have seized our minds. We're letting the country down and, what's more, we're letting ourselves down.

Of course, it's no coincidence that we're a generation of voters who reached political maturity under New Labour. Millions of us made our voices heard before the war in Iraq, on the state visit of George Bush, over student loans, perhaps even for the countryside offence. Last we checked, no one was taking 'Why Vote?' Who but What's the point? The only pressing left-wing issue of our time has involved the England football team. We simply don't know any different. ▼



But it wasn't always like this, and we're not talking about the '60s and '70s – after all, it's the children of those revolutions who are facing us now today. No, we're talking about the 1980s. It might be the decade that tends to get forgotten, but some things are worth remembering. Thatcher, Scargill, Derek Hutton, the Falklands – all contributed to one of the most radical landscapes in British political history, and it all took place in our lifetime.

Let's not forget, we spoke to three people who shaped that landscape. Sir Bernard Ingham, press secretary to Margaret Thatcher throughout the Falklands War and the miners' strike, Derek Hutton, a Labour militant and Liverpool councillor expelled from the party in 1986 for promoting Trotskyism, and George Jones, now political editor of *The Daily Telegraph*, who covered the Falklands War for *The Sunday Telegraph*.

**WATTON** In the '80s it was black and white, lit and T-shirt. You got no prices for second place. There's no doubt about it that at the time there was the chance – and probably it was the best chance in any of our lifetimes – for ordinary people to grab hold of the economy and power and politics, and say, 'There is going to be accountability. There is a chance for fundamental change.'

**INGHAM** Anybody who lived through the '80s, '60s and '70s and says that this was a socially cohesive society is taking through their hat. The plain fact is that there was a body of people within this country who were absolutely determined to bring capitalism down, and there's no point ducking the issue: these people adored the Kray's. Arthur Scargill was one of them. Margaret Thatcher didn't back for trouble if there was no trouble there, but there was trouble and he was called Scargill. He would have brought down the Labour government if he could; he was quite powerful in that respect. He was a whistler. The 'hoon' left he called them. They were a dangerous set.

**WATTON** I respect Scargill in that right from the very beginning he was principled; he wasn't going to give in. But the factors were exaggerated by the likes of Kinnock and the press because they saw a movement within Labour that could totally transform not only the party but society as well. To big business and

the media that was fighting. Rupert Murdoch was never going to be a supporter of ours. The Daily Mail was never going to be a supporter of ours. At the time, there's no doubt about it, there was a lot about the whole liberal philosophy that we adopted and was fundamental to our thinking. But I don't believe we were going to bring the country down. I believe we were going to bring the system down. When they say about the trade unions having too much power, in their terms of course the trade unions had too much power! What we wanted was for the trade unions to have a lot more power.

**JONES:** Labour were all over the place, they were fighting with each other, they had different policies on internationalism, pulling out of the common market and all sorts of things. I don't think there's any way they could have won the 1983 election, but they might not have but it as badly had they not had such stupid policies.

**HUTTON:** I think that is probably one of the biggest bands of error – that we were unselective. Far from it. The reason they were so scared of us is because we were very selective. But there's no point being definite about it: we got fucking stuffed. Thatcher won the battle, and that was that – the workers had no say and no involvement and no control at all.

**INGHAM:** The plan felt is that Margaret Thatcher and her government rejected this nation. She was an exceptional political animal who understood the aspirations of the people of Great Britain, and was prepared to do difficult things in order that those aspirations might be achieved. She was certainly elusive, she polarised opinion, but even those who hate her quite recognise her exceptional leadership qualities.

**HUTTON:** Margaret Thatcher will go down in history as the most successful peacetime prime minister of the twentieth century. Not because she was successful or good, not because I agree with her – far from it, I wish she'd been shot at birth – but because she actually said what she wanted to do and then went ahead and did it. She changed society in a way that nobody believed it would have been changed. All the selfishness in business, all the competitiveness, all the selfishness, all the

diffidence about everyone else, all that stemmed from her reign.

**INGHAM:** There was a recognition in the country that this was a job that had to be gone through to clear with the cancer. One junior minister who'd been in the Tory government of 1949 said to me, 'You civil servants simply didn't understand that the British people are ready for a period of privatisation, and if they think you can get them out of this deep trouble we'll be free'.

**HUTTON:** People say to me that in these days there was a lot of social attraction around Margaret Thatcher. They ask, 'Would you have? Would you?' I certainly wouldn't have, but I know one thing, she didn't half fuck me.

**JONES:** She is still the dominant figure in terms of the way she has shaped politics. But the big tragedy of Margaret Thatcher is that – in a way because she had fought the miners' strike, the Falklands, and on the whole question of the Cold War was a very convincing figure – she made the mistake of allowing her strength of character to be caricatured as someone who was vicious.

**INGHAM:** I don't believe that the Falklands War was a significant political event. It was seen by the Left as a political opportunity, but it was seen by the government of the day as an unfortunate problem that had to be dealt with. I think, to be fair, they [the Argentines] brought it upon themselves.

**JONES:** The importance of the Falklands War was that it came at a time when Britain had lost an empire, had been humiliated in Suez, had stayed outside the Vietnam War, and had been plagued by domestic difficulties. Then suddenly the tail of this mighty old lion was bewailed by Argentina, and it became a symbol of the whole collapse of Britain. In a way it was great Roy's Own stuff. It was a huge gamble, a huge risk to do it, and whereas many other politicians would have negotiated a settlement, she said, 'No, we must go and get it back'. I don't think she did it thinking, 'If I do this it's going to make me appear a strong prime minister'. She did it because that was her gut instinct, and it paid off.

**HUTTON:** The reality is that Thatcher was at an altitude, low in popularity. She was going to get stuffed at the next election, and that was despite the fact that the Labour Party offered no real alternative in Kinnock because, to be honest, he was a bit of a performance piece. Now all of a sudden a group of rocks somewhere down near South America that nobody had ever heard of before came on the scene. And not only had nobody ever heard of them before, they certainly didn't know that we controlled them. Nobody had a clue that we owned the Falklands, but all of a sudden there was a war.

**JONES:** It's quite clear now, after the event, that we were misread – they used propaganda, as it were, they didn't tell us the full story. It was a government that was in control of the information, and it's probably the last war in which they have been as much in control – where they could apply censorship.

**HUTTON:** All of a sudden the 'no news' stuff started – the Sunday Mail did an absolutely brilliant job in terms of whipping up the whole xenophobia thing. The Sunday Mail, 'hey, here's a chance to really get the country behind Thatcher'. Straight away the whole mood changed, almost overnight.

**JONES:** You had the Sun newspaper which had the famous 'Gutted' headline when Gholson was sunk. But that's what they do. I think there's no doubt that most of the newspapers see this as a hugely important moment for Britain and its place and reputation in the world.

**HUTTON:** If you want to ask me now whether I believed in socialism to say fundamentally no – to say now it's irrelevant, it's unimportant, and there's no way at this moment in time that you'll ever, ever see a situation like the '80s again. I speak to people now who I was very close to in those days and some of them are still saying the same things that they said then. Well they need a good smack of their head against a brick wall because they're kidding themselves. I had a go, I had a go more than most have a go, unfortunately we got stuffed so we have to say, 'Time, okay, we'll live our lives as best we can and make sure that nobody gets hurt in the process'. I think that's the position we're in now. ■

DEAN ROGERS DESCRIBES HIS WORK AS A COMMENT ON "THE CONSTANT VISUAL INPUT OF BEING IN THE WORLD TODAY". THROUGH HIS COLLABORATION WITH SHANE MEADOWS, HIS INTUITIVE, INQUISITIVE PHOTOGRAPHY ILLUSTRATES THE DARK IMAGINATION AT WORK ON THE FRINGES OF ORDINARY SOCIETY. HERE WE PRESENT A SELECTION OF HIS ON-SET PHOTOGRAPHY FROM SHANE'S FILMS.

# LOOK INTO MY EYES





THE LEFT  
 Jack and Diane  
*If There Be Thorns There Shall Be Flowers* (2019)

THE LEFT  
 Thomas O'Connell  
*From Open Time in the Midlands* (2002)

THE LEFT  
 Tully (Columbus)  
*Dead Man - Deer* (2004)



LETTY  
*A House for James Brown* (1979)  
 MELLOP  
*Lonely Transients*  
*Open Up a Time in the Midland* (1980)  
 KERRY  
*Public Consensus*  
*Good Afternoon* (1984)









**LEFT PAGE**  
*Shy Beauty*  
*David Allen's Blues* (2006)

**LEFT**  
*Rocky Gaudin*  
*A Home for Homeless Blues* (2005)

**RIGHT**  
*David Allen's Blues* (2006)





DICK HEDDIGE'S THIS IS ENGLAND! AND THEY DON'T LIVE HERE EXPLORES THE EXPLOSIVE CULTURAL MOMENT OF SKINHEAD RACISM IN THE 1980S. HERE, HE INTRODUCES AN EXTRACT FROM HIS SEMINAL ESSAY.

# THE DANCE OF SKIN

INTERVIEW BY BOCHENSKI ILLUSTRATIONS BY MARK TAYLOR

In 1982, culture theorist and subculturalist "Dick" Dick Heddige jumped boat first into the thriving, throbbing sunhead scene of London's East End. He emerged with an essay, *This Is England! And They Don't Live Here*, an authentic document from a lost world of racial hatred and social meltdown, written with all the swaggering energy of the streets. Now an academic at the University of Carolina in Santa Barbara, he speaks to *DMZ* about the good old, bad old days.

**LWL:** Originally, did you get involved with this scene as an academic or as an authentic skin?

**Heddige:** I straddled both worlds. I was around 30 in the early '80s, and I'd published my first book in '79, about how the series of mainly white working-class British subcultural styles—mods, rockers, ravers, punks—were indirect responses to the presence in Britain of nonwhite immigrant populations. So I was used to simultaneously living in a subcultural milieu and writing reflexively about it.

**LWL:** How did you get accepted into that culture?

**Heddige:** There was a clothes shop, I think in Bethnal Green or Whitechapel or Hoxton, where a lot of Oi people hung out. I got introduced to people and spent a couple of weeks going to gigs and listening to music. I didn't hide the fact I was writing an article, but I didn't mention that originally it was for a mag called *The New Socialist*. That might have closed a lot of mouths and left me with a few fourth-movers. I still sounded like a Fulham-boy too, you know, when Fulham meant using racial merchants and people called Sonny and Ronny not Harriots and Dan.

**LWL:** What did you hope to achieve?

**Heddige:** I wanted to complicate the picture that the

left-leaning alternative imagined would be coming. The New Socialist was likely to love of rightwing skins from Bethnal Green. I could understand how white underclass resentment, the sense of marginalization, drinking and "ramming" could lead to aggression and white nationalism. It was encouraging some critical reflection on what the skinhead thing might mean for readers and outsiders alike.

**LWL:** Were the tabloids right to be afraid of the skins? Were they dangerous?

**Heddige:** Well, I don't think Cambridge dons or corporate CEOs or the Queen or Mrs Thatcher were shaking in their Wellingtons.

**LWL:** Why do youth cultures today seem less politically engaged?

**Heddige:** I get the sense from my students that the old left-right polarities and protests that were so fashionable from punk through to the early '80s now seem played out and corny. Youth culture in the west in the twenty-first century seems to be more about evading external surveillance long enough to develop something autonomous and singular before it gets co-opted and blighted by the Internet masses, rather than deliberately seeking tabloid attention by starting rucks over rock 'n' roll.

**LWL:** Could you "explain" racism, then or now?

**Heddige:** In the end I think it's about humiliation. The matrix of humiliation is an obvious but all too often neglected condition both driving many of the more violent cultural and political phenomena in our era. I don't think you can understand what motivates a Palestinian suicide bomber any more than you can a blood and honor Jew slapping skin without taking humiliation into account as a major motivating factor. ▼

# THIS IS ENGLAND! AND THEY DON'T LIVE HERE

BY DICK HEBDIGE

"I DON'T Know why I LIKE BEING a SKIN But I do. But I don't SEE Why people grope us together as holligans 'cos we ain't alright you get trouble makers in every facktion But they don't publish it if a niggeR does a old Biddy do they give us a fair will someone as for stop being a SKIN I dont think I will."

Harry the Duck  
Says TO BE A Skin

I MET HARRY THE DUCK, a 16-year-old skin, in an East London street one hot July afternoon in 1981. I asked him to write down what he liked about the skinned style and, after a few moments' thought, he dashed off the vision. What he produced was a genuine statement of why a document to be placed alongside other such documents, delivered with the same 'how's-your-father?' flourish as a graffiti shape on a council estate wall, or a post plastered through an A-level shop window or a griffin of petrol poured through the letterbox of a fringe family's home. It speaks with an unmistakable near-city accent from the centre of a world everybody recognises even if it's only from headlines in *The Sun* — a world full of 'social problems' where all the capitals and the victims live — 'hoppers', 'holligans', 'old biddies'. This is the voice of Britain's dying subculture, it serves all the symptoms of the sickness: violence, resentment, an incoherent, bitter and arbitrarily focused rage... racism.

For Harry is the postmodernist skin, he embraces nihil everybody. Power included, Power is powerless, 'cause to be topical is the ultimate commitment. He is renowned and not especially bright. He is not articulate and he can hardly write. His opinions are more like spraying with hot liquid. He is not a pretty sight. From the grey-film of ginger hair which covers his scalp but fails to conceal it, to his gleaming Dr. Martens, Harry

is designed to make anyone who has even the smallest stain in the innocent scheme of things cross over to the other side of the street.

He is the social worker's nightmare. He doesn't correspond to any of the multiple fictions produced over the last hundred years or so by a long line of social reformers and social philosophers of what the working class should be. He isn't grateful or contented. He isn't even necessarily rebellious. Instead he is an incomprehensible as the formal letters which describe his skinny style, as puzzled as his own words on 'What it Means to Be a Skin'. He is himself unscrutable and hence agreeable — a writing occasion limited to the sympathetic educated sensibility which seems semantically to understand him and set him on the straight and narrow. He is that most traditional of stereotypes — the working-class gone bad. He is the Last, the Uzi, the Wild Boy who looks the part of Charles Dickens and a thousand official reports on Juvenile Delinquency. He is the point where Bill Snydes meets Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

Harry skinned knows all this subtextually. The style reveals some of the earliest images of British class life (the Victorian times, the slum, hard war, the mark of the institution. As soon as a skin had entered a Ragged School or a hardwar or a boarding home, he was taken to prison education.) The skinned style, for all its apparent leanness and drive, is a consciously held pose, a deliberate turning back to earlier, more certain times when most men and girls took by their bikes through thick and thin, a time when all observers could tell an individual's social status by merely glancing down at the backrest or at the way a person walked. ▼



The dance of skin is, then, ever for the gaze, a sense of outward masculinity — the geometry of message. For skinheads are playing with the only power at their disposal — the power of having nothing (much) to lose. The skin, in other words, its. Contrary to the media stereotype of the mindless skinned frog, it has its own logic, its own rules and reasons. It makes its own kind of sense.

**THE SKINHEAD STYLE** is a defensive assertion of whiteness just as Rasta is a celebration of the black cultural code. Both can be seen as gender statements of making something out of nothing, attempts at ending something even if it's only a touch out of the which, is more casual, to be less already run into a collection of black words: "unemployment," "old jobs" and "humble workers with the law." Both Rasta and Skin can be seen as both for some kind of dignity, for what the late John Merenda, original mad cow medicine manager of The Who once called "clean living under difficult circumstances": grace under pressure.

The skinned retreat into white ethnicity — the skin's what the flag waving is really all about — is, simply, the Last Resort. Meanwhile, the skinned/HQ stereotype serves a wider function. It's a form of threat representing no less wrongheaded than "racism" (enlarged in by some members of the Press) which converts every black boy into a nigger. The beauty and violence which are swiftly entailed when a race or two racially homogeneous society becomes multiracial are displaced into a solitary figure — the young bootboy. In that way, it — the ugly kind of racism — becomes love, the skin. It has a name. It has a look. It is There, not Us.

Real skin are much less colored than the stereotype. Subcultures, after all, don't offer solutions to national problems. They play back the problems symbolically in style, and style alone can't bridge the gap between cultural/clay responses.

"I don't like blacks," said one skin. "I don't want them in this country, but don't put me name down."

A lot of the mates are black, greasers and some of them are a bit basty." A madhead skin burnt by the one good thing is Jane sits on an empty stall in Peabody Lane market in the late afternoon. He tells me the National Front's "a load of rubbish", that politicians are "a waste of time" and that when he sees his nan, "...she's always on about me getting a job. I had one good job working in a record shop. I was there a couple of weeks and the record business went bust and she had to close down. Sometimes I bark it up City and Guide by evening class. But I don't see the point. What a State. They've got to be worse now, haven't they? The whole country's worse now..."

The bootboy went apoplectic. He opens for meath and raddley the "back of throat" because just a boy who can't see any future. Like being the Duck, he is an outcast, born out of his time. Reversing the initial fact is that big business no longer needs brute force (except perhaps as Export factories). It has less and less need for muscle and mechanical skills. Indeed we are living in a time when we can watch a TV ad which tells us that cars which are way beyond the range of most people's pockets are being "financed" (borrowed) (and) by robots. Historically, the manual working class is on the way out. It's bad to day in a country like ours.

But meanwhile the Ramms and The Chads and the Togs have to cope as best they can — victims of an economic shift which the Tories sometimes call "downsizing." (Meanwhile, they foot about like a third world, because is the knowledge that they're already lost).

But in the end, it's not all that bad. "You can always dress up in somebody else's dress and hear Tony's always bowels and the legs. Tony's always Rasta. As a Last Resort, as a last romantic gesture, you can always throw yourself away before they do it for you. ■

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IF YOU BELIEVE THE TABLOIDS, 'SKINHEAD' MUSIC WAS THE RIGHT-WING SOUNDTRACK TO RIOTS AND RACISM. YOU SHOULD NEVER BELIEVE THE TABLOIDS.

WORDS BY PAUL FINKELHOR  
ILLUSTRATION BY JIRO INEYR

"I don't wanna be a punk no more... I'm gonna be a rude boy. Like me dad."

Olive, from Dad and Nancy

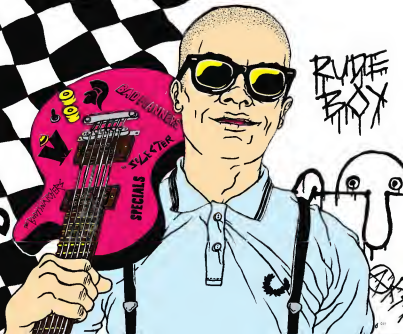
It's a warm spring evening at Reading University. A hair metal scene begins to unfold as frizzy-haired and wild-haired punks, The Redskins, are joined on a small stage by Billy Bragg and former Specials emcee Jerry Dammers. As the music

erupts Dammers pounds out The Henry J. Elkins' track "Capacitor" on his keyboard, a group of three or four skinheads begin to break away from the stumbling crowd and, hiking arms, start to pump. "Skinheads are back! Dog Rod," they chant, allowing the Ramones slide in time to the beats circus.

They are joined for no more than half a minute before a group of eight or 10 other skinheads sweep them from the floor in a shower

of lager and plastic pint pots. The band doesn't stop a beat, but outside there are muffled shouts, breaking glass and the unmistakable thump of an angry footballer swinging an anger.

Perhaps it was to be expected, these boys weren't "skinny" like a lot of the audience: no Fred Perry or Ben Sherman, 14- rather than caplinole Dr. Martens and smoking back Special Biscuits where there was Red Stripe or rum and coke available at the bar. ▼



They were 'boneheads', unrecognisable from the original skins, skinheads whose style had grown out of mod, and whose musical tastes were people like Jimmy Cliff, Desmond Dekker and Jackie Mittoo – skerry looking Jamaicans all. But unlike their forbears, the skinheads of the early 80s emerged into a fractured country short on optimism. Unemployment had doubled in less than two years, taxes were up, inflation was hitting 18 per cent, and England's major cities were abuzz with rioting in the summer months. Cliff's Wonderful World, Sexual People weren't exactly a national soundtrack.

While rude boy bands like The Specials and The Beat drew from the original ska sound and inhaled into something uniquely British, others faded or, in the case of Bad Manners, became caricatured grotesques channeling out grandiose-friendly novelty pop.

Increasingly, the music associated with the boots 'n' braces culture was divorcing itself of its Jamaican roots, and the new sound drawing in the skinhead audience was an aggressive, definitely working-class back-to-basics punk.

*All Sounds*, always the most unreconstructed of the rock weeklies, equally unreconstructed music journalist Garry Bushell would channel the noise from the streets, "O! As well as embracing jobbers, O! was an overwhelmingly white scene, which didn't help when its reputation was blackened by links to the National Front."

Today, Bushell is adamant that O! was a more complex beast than it's been given credit for, and that it was talked into unbecomeliness that made it a bogymine of youth culture. "The idea that O! was racist or Nazi stems mostly from the Daily Mail and the Southall riot [an anti-Nazi protest in 1993 in which a campaigner was killed, allegedly by the police]," he says. "O! bends responded with a hour called, ludicrously, *O! Against Racism and Political Extremism But Still Against the Spots*. The idea that all British second generation skins were Nazis or even racist is just mad."

In fairness, this copy-titled rooster to the left wasn't an exception: early London O! bands like the Anglio Upstarts and Cockney Rejects were heavily involved in campaigns against unemployment and support for strikers, but it was a skinhead band from York with a very different style that would finally confound the popular image of skinheads

# O! WAS ABOUT DRINKING BEER, GOING TO FOOTBALL MATCHES AND GETTING SHAGGED – IN NO PARTICULAR ORDER

By the time Oi was making headlines in the music press, The Redskins' bassist Martin Hewes had abandoned his brief flirtation with prog, noodling and heavy rock for the energy of punk, ska and their obligatory political subjects, Rock Against Racism and the FabFour League. It was a time when everything had a political connotation, from the colour of your boat licks to the music you listened to, and it was Oi's failure to grasp that fact, says Hewes, that left it open to exploitation.

"The Oi lingo was never particularly complex, but at the same time they were not naive," he recalls. "Oi was about drinking beer, going to football matches and getting shagged – in no particular order. It endeavoured to be apolitical. Unfortunately it existed in an environment that was not apolitical, and right-wing skinheads took advantage of that and ultimately gave Oi the bad name that it probably didn't deserve."

Having picked up on Oi's messages with their debut, *Levi Destruction*, a riff-driven love song to Leon Trotsky, The Redskins added a brass section, and singer Chris Duffell's voice lost its snarl in favour of a wounded, Otis Redding-affected yelp, taking the band beyond the range of their crop-headed contemporaries. They were bypassing ska and roots altogether, and tapping on the foot-stomping rhythms that had filled Northern Soul nightclubs in the previous decade. However, these were songs about the power of collective action in a late

industrial economy rather than being done *wring by your women*.

"Our sound was influenced by all the music that we were hearing around us at the time," says Hewes. "We never wanted to be labeled as a 'skinhead' band because we always wanted to appeal to a wider audience, specifically because our main motivation was to put socialist ideas back on the agenda."

To the band, musical style was governed at least as much by propaganda considerations as personal taste. "We felt that our music had to encompass a wider range of styles in order to include as many different sub-cultures as possible. Consequently our gigs were attended by a very wide cross section of individuals who were ultimately united by an interest in socialist ideas. In general, our hardcore fans were a real mixed bag of punks, cheifs, thrashers, editors, rising poets, skins, mods, rockabillys and hardcore lefties."

The Cheifs – a group of socialists who were, well, cheifs – were a fixture of Redskins gigs but rarely made their presence felt to the extent of some of those 'hardcore lefties' known as Red Aches. Skinheads of the old school, they were also committed socialists whose politics never stood in the way of their love of beer and a rack, even with other members of the audience.

Despite offering an explanation of the group's relatively sophisticated ideology, Gerry Bushell is characteristically sceptical of the rank

and file's motivation. "At heart, they were thugs," he remembers. "They enjoyed violent confrontation with their ideological opposites, the Fasci, seeking it out for its own sake, and they clearly came loaded up with coshes, batons and pick axe handles."

But to those in The Redskins' audience on the receiving end of the Fasci, the presence of a bunch of leftwing hard hats could be reassuring, even if the band themselves organised their own protection, as Martin Hewes remembers. "After being attacked at the 'Jobs for a Change' festival in Jubilee Gardens, we did keep baseball bats on stage just in case some right-wing nutters decided to try and attack us. To be honest, Britain is quite mild in comparison to continental Europe – Germany in particular – where it was not uncommon to be informed that audience members had had guns and knives taken off them prior to the gig. That's somewhat more scary than some pathetic Nazi shouting obscenities at you."

To Hewes the trouble wasn't a new phenomenon. "I'd seen it all before at gigs in the late '70s, about from the audience rather than the stage. It baffled him this too. "It seemed ludicrous to us that at a New York gig, five skinheads would happily dance to the Specials for half the gig then start a fight. Why listen to music that had its roots in Jamaican culture and then try and beat the crap out of other people who didn't agree with your early most idents?"

Despite a few left-leaning Londoners, musical and otherwise, it's a question that has dogged skinheads since the time when the 2 Tone man, rendered with varying degrees of expertise, adorned pencil cases across the country. Sometimes, that same pencil case would sport a National Front logo too.

Perhaps it's the uncompromising nature of skinhead culture and the passion it inspires in its most devoted adherents that makes it such fertile ground for the politics of passion, whether love or hate. But even before Mrs Thatcher bloodied herself down South, most skinheads had slipped into Pringle and Tooties and were embracing a new generation of black music.

Martin Hewes retains his political convictions, but has he softened true to the skinhead ethos? "Not really," he says. "Although I still get a grade two every month..." *Aaaaah!* ■



# GOT NEED GOT

FOOTWEAR



NO 6  
TRUCKER



TEAM WEAR



TIPPED  
SHIRT



FOOTWEAR



RUBIK'S  
CUBE





WIKEN



CENTRAL  
STATION SHORTS



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LEATHER  
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CLIPPERS



NAKED



ADJUSTABLE  
BRACES



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THE DOWNING  
STREET YEARS





People  
have  
been searching  
for this place for

years. But nobody seems to know where on earth

it is. It doesn't appear in any guide books. Or on any maps. No matter how many black & white photographs and bits of grainy super-eight

footage emerge depicting movie legends and world leaders cowering at its doorstep, nobody can figure out just where it is. Some say it's down

Monte way, but it could just as easily be Montenegro. Some people say it's just a myth, a composite of anecdotes and rumours,

remnantised over the years. The residents certainly won't gonna tell anybody that is, if they actually know themselves.

Most people will never find it. They're all far too busy looking for it.

Bubba...

Bubba is a thirty-five-year-old Nigerian from Lagos, the world's largest slum, where he works and greets patron taxi to the public bus at 12 a. He also keeps a close eye on them during their stop. Sometimes, he knows about what's before it's even suggested. Bubba left his native land five years ago to seek his fortune. He left behind three wives, seventeen children, and his beloved mother. At the end of each week he divides his salary up and posts it back to them. This doesn't leave much for him, but he doesn't mind, he has plenty to smile about. He needs to get by on his grin, and random words he's picked up from his favourite TV show, *You See Your Way*. Inspired by none other than Bruce Laughton. Considering he arrived here after clinging to the remains of his brass-made raft for 95 days, he is one of the luckiest braves beings on earth. Making upsets him. In fact, everything seems to make him happy. This can't be denied by Bubba's jolly nature. It comes with a minor story about. As you will discover to your cost, should you ever play

with an speed chess. He's a grand master



Ask as many as a million designers, Cherry-Jane Widdowson what she's doing is here and she'll tell you:

She's on her way to the top. Cherry believes in everything. Santa Claus, ghosts, Jesus.

She's the hippest girl who visits door-to-door salesmen into the house and listens carefully to every single word.

She's the girl greasemonks in 'Pisidons every night, just as they don't worry. But she knows she's gonna be first, she just knows it. She plans to turn herself from sales small town innocent, into a post century fox.

You ask what she might be about as her future is known as you could hope to meet, she has an extraordinary talent. She has what her grandma would call politically incorrect call 'black lungs'. Yep, this girl can sing.

And when she's done, she's going to take on the world.



## HOTDOG & LUCIA

Lucia Martinez, 36, dark, sexy, standing, as beautiful now as she has always had a thing about hot dogs. So much so, she used to volunteer to do conjugal visits at the local penitentiary. The moment she got over ex-Marines P. Delgado (aka Hotdog) in the visiting area of San Quentin Prison, she knew. Martinez P. Delgado III is an indomitable criminal. The moment Lucia pressed a voluptuously placed torso up against the security glass of the prison visiting area, he knew. They've been pretty busy since. Raising her parents. Getting it on, ripping people off. Getting it on, ripping people off... Unfortunately the day they decided to join the Wet Season Waterbed Showers, they had a conflict of interests. Having had up the manager and emptied the safe, they decided to celebrate as the \$6,000 starting line potter. Security showed up, and following a frank exchange of epithets and an instant lawsuit, they were forced to take a spontaneous honeymoon. He loves legally, she loves the union. They just kind of work.



*It's a review will not be asked and by any personal taste. Just as movies are about more than the two hours you spend sitting in the cinema, our reviews are a chance to talk about much more than the immediate experience of the film in question. There are many different aspects of the movie-going experience and we will embrace them all.*

#### Anticipation

Three weeks or so months for a home office behemoth! Read a book that you loved and intensely watched the adaptation? Been pleasantly surprised by an off-the-radar independent? Anticipation plays a crucial role in your reaction to a movie. Rather than ignore it, we think it should be measured and acknowledged as part of the movie-going experience.

*Marked out of 5*

#### Enjoyment

All other things aside, how did you feel for about two hours? Were you glued to your seat? Did the film speak to your soul? Was it surprising, disappointing, or just plain boring? Were you even awake?

*Marked out of 5*

#### In Retrospect

Great movies live with you; you carry them around wherever you go and the things they say shape the way you see the world. Did this movie fade away so was every moment burned into your retina? Was it a quick fix action flick, good for a rainy Sunday afternoon? Or the first day of the rest of your life? Did you leave it with a fury only to fall in love with it a year? Or did that first love fade away like a distant memory?

*Marked out of 5*

## CHAPTER FOUR

### IN WHICH WE

### DISCUSS THE LATEST

### FILM RELEASES



## BLACK SNAKE MOAN

CRISTINA RICCI  
ROSE

CRISTINA RICCI'S  
CRISTINA RICCI  
CRISTINA RICCI

### While Craig Brewer's

debut, *The Room and Hungry*, dealt with distant music's power to inspire, and his 2005 sleeper hit *Hustle & Flow* was about an aspiring rapper. *Black Snake Moan* — an emotionally charged drama set in the Deep South — is suffused with the spirit of the blues. Named after a Blind Lemon Jefferson song from the '20s about the demons that plague you when you're alone, it explores the relationship between two characters who have little to live for.

Cristina Ricci's performance as sex-victim-turned-symphonicist Rose is possibly the one she'll be remembered for. While playing fucked-up white trash isn't new terrain for her (remember her witty, defiant turn as gold-

digger Gede in *The Opposite of Sex*), she does it here with such conviction that her angular, tired face is often painful to behold.

Titty and tough, with dirty blonde bangs, Rose is a girl who "[in the words of one character] 'has been rut on and beat on all her days'." Wild and tormented, she is rescued by God-fearing blues singer Lazarus (a grizzled, hulking Samuel L. Jackson) when one of these beatings leaves her half-naked and comatose in a ditch near his farm.

What follows isn't quite the heart-wrenching tale of emotional thawing you might imagine. Rose still blackens and bloody, begs Lazarus to do what he wants to her. But what he wants is to chain her still uncomfortably near-

naked, to a radiator to help tame those inner demons.

It's music, which connects each of the characters, that helps forge some kind of bond. In a pivotal scene, Lazarus sings the blues tune of the title, dark and fierce as hell, as a thunderstorm bellows outside. Music stands for the prospect of something more than suffering in life, even as it acknowledges how sharp the suffering is, it's when the characters sing to each other that the possibility of happiness is most acute.

It would be disappointing if *Black Snake Moan* is remembered only for its sexual and racial imagery, with a tagline like *The holder down South* and a poster shot of Ricci posing provocatively

in chains, it's being marketed as a less interesting film than it actually is: a heady mix of sex, sin, race and religion, and maybe the first Southern movie to successfully channel the spirit of the blues. **A-** *Jeff Labrecq*

**Anticipation:** Weather the marketing angle for the prospect of another Jackson/Blake movie: potential greatness. **D+**

**Enjoyment:** Gripping, heart wrenching, visually strong. **B+**

**In Retrospect:** You'll tell your friends about it, but you won't see straight out. To buy it on DVD. **D+**

## An interview with Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck, director of *The Lives of Others*.

**LWline:** Growing up in West Germany, were there certain topics that were off-limits for filmmakers?

**von Donnersmarck:** Off-limits? I suppose you could have made films about anything, but you tend to be limited by the fact that people chronically underestimate the audience. It was the same when I started making this film. If you look at how educated modern audiences are, we should be making more sophisticated films than ever because there is a level of culture now that is unparalleled in any other period of history.

**LWline:** Do you think that is reflected in the kind of films being made in Germany now?

**von Donnersmarck:** No, people want you to make, pretty much, comedies. I heard so often when I went around shopping with this screenplay, "Well, you can obviously write - why don't you re-write it into a comedy? And then we'll finance it."

**LWline:** *The Lives of Others*?

**von Donnersmarck:** Yeah, they said, "look, we like your comedy screen, you're on a roll here so why not just go on writing that?" I think there's this feeling that people will not be willing to watch a dramatic film. But they are, you know, and I think the success of this film has shown that.

**LWline:** You must feel pretty good about being right?

**von Donnersmarck:** When I meet people now who say, "We obviously gave a strong statement of this", I say, "I hope you'll just remember not to underestimate the audience again." People want something that's interesting - of course, if it's boring then it's so too even if it's something that's culturally valuable. But if it's not boring, then people would prefer something that's of more cultural substance to something that does not have that.

**LWline:** Do you think it's fair to say that German audiences are unusually receptive right now to films dealing with difficult elements of their past?

**von Donnersmarck:** You must not forget that we became the inventors of psychoanalysis, which pretty much says that you have to look at the dark and hidden aspects of your past in order to be able to look into the present or into the future without weight and shadow worry. I think that's a pretty fundamental part of German nature, that's just how we see. I think Germany generally has been quite good at looking at its past, and I think it's quite a healthy thing.

**LWline:** Do you see yourself as embodying a kind of new, outward-looking, American-friendly style?

**von Donnersmarck:** American-friendly, definitely. I think for any filmmaker to pretend that they're not American-friendly is just hypocritical because we were all shaped so much by American film. When I have a filmmaker being anti-American in their character, I know they're a hypocrite. **MB: Behind?**

For the full transcript of this interview, hit up the usual place: [www.filminterview.com](http://www.filminterview.com)



## THE LIVES OF OTHERS

Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck's first feature film, *The Lives of Others*, is a masterpiece of suspense and drama.

RECEIVED  
MAY 11

This taut, pre-

glacial potboiler from rising young debutant Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck (34 in May) is further proof after last year's *Respect* (and, to a lesser extent, *Perfume*) that German cinema is in its finest form since Herzog, Fassbinder and Wenders were at the height of their powers.

With a knowing pre-credits roll-of-the-cup to George Orwell, the year is 1984 and the German Democratic Republic maintains a firm stranglehold over its subjects via a network of spy rings and secret state enforcers (the Stasi) who operate with a cold moral

detachment. Described as the "shield and sword of the ruling party", the Stasi's mission of extolling the virtues of Soviet communism inevitably requires pawns to be killed, petty drivers to be rifled and back issues of *Der Spiegel* to be stolen in the hope that an essay on 'Why the glorious Dynamo Berlin are bad for football' fails to the floor.

This whirlwind melodrama centres on the unsmiling Captain Greg Weiser (Ulrich Mühe), your typical GDR party man, who sports an anodyne grey enrok and functional crew cut while

implementing his work with gleazy precision. It is Weiser's lapse of loyalty during a routine mission that acts as the film's dramatic nucleus. He is ordered to bring a sympathetic playwright (Sebastian Koch) suspected of subversion, while monitoring his glib-popping sheep girlfriend (Martina Gedeck), who happens to be the object of the pig-like Minister of Culture's affections.

With its themes of voyeurism, paranoia, the abuse of power and the inescapable degradation of totalitarian states, *The Lives of Others* plays out like a mixture of Prince Paul Coppola's *The*

Conversation and Terry Gilliam's *Brazil*. But it is also suffused with a righteous political anger, shaking its finger at various contemporary regimes with a penchant for violating civil rights in the name of Patriot and Terrorism Acts.

While the performances are uniformly excellent (in particular Mühe) and the tighter-than-tight plotting is a thing of beauty, the film does contain a few false notes. The film's share of GDR dissidents were writers, actors and artists, so why Weiser's flirtation with humans should rest its head during this particular case seems somewhat dubious.

Also, while the dramatic hue may have been notably blackened by the absence of the pale oranges and powder blues of good-natured *Das Leben*, *The Lives of Others* remains stubbornly critical of the East German power structure, suggesting (perhaps a little naively) that it facilitated as much corruption as it was able to quell.

But in truth, such nitpicking pales in the face of a film that positively brims with heart and head. Few directors could take such potentially bland subject matter and twist it so successfully into an engaging study of

characters on the political and ethical margins. All in all, it's a stunning first feature, thoroughly deserving of huge success. **David Jenkins**

**Anticipation:** Sweated-out great word of mouth after massive successful festival screenings. **Fear**

**Enjoyment:** Swigs like a wine throughout. **Fine**

**In Retrospect:** Almost under-liked, but not quite. Still, a commanding success. **Fair**

## CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER

Directed by  
Zhang Yimou  
Cast: Gong Li, Chen Kun, Li Xuejian

120 minutes  
R-15

### There's a sensual

depravity to Zhang Yimou's latest epic, *Curse of the Golden Flower*, a decadent exhibition in its spellbinding surfeit of colour and swordplay.

From the golden armour of 12,000 warriors, to the rainbow robes of the royal palace, this is a no-expense-spared spectacle of tenth-century China, where the only thing stacked higher than the corpses is the heaving cleavage of Empress Phoenix.

The Empress (Gong Li) is the mistress of the dysfunctional Tang Dynasty. She is the second wife of the all-powerful Emperor (Chen Yun-Fu) who is slowly having her

poisoned by the Inheritor Doctor. But she is no innocent victim, conducting an affair with her stepson, the Crown Prince (Jia Yi), who, in turn, dreams of rebecoming with the Doctor's daughter.

Add to this combustible mix a succession crisis and the fast-approaching Chang Yang festival of chrysanthemums, and the stage is set for a Shakespearean showdown.

For a film driven by sexual intrigue, *Curse of the Golden Flower*'s biggest problem is its tepid chemistry. Its vision of buxom serving girls may have caused quite the stir in South East Asia, but to Western eyes, there's

nothing remotely sexy about the film's sexual dynamics.

Zhang delights in the formal intricacy of action cinema, and establishes the visual opulence of material things, but when it comes to physical sexuality the film falls flat on its face. The director pulls the strings like a puppeteer, but he has no feeling for the flesh-and-blood eroticism of real people.

And although he shoots the hell out of the fight scenes (the Emperor has a private army that attacks like a squad of ninja spiders), what the film lacks most of all is a sense of balance. It moves seamlessly from the quiet repose of a chamber piece to the

sweeping curves of epic tragedy, proving, in the end, to be too exhausting and too extravagant.

With its colossal scale and ravishing design, *Curse of the Golden Flower* is like staring straight at the sun – momentarily glorious but scorching in its intensity. **Neil Becham**

**Anticipation:** #  
**Masterpiece in Eastern action:** Star

**Enjoyment:** Two too will want a movie army. Three

**In retrospect:** The world's green needs a rethink. Two



## AWAY FROM HER

BY MARK  
KISSEL

AWAY FROM HER  
CASTING  
BY JULIE CHRISTIE  
PRODUCTION  
DESIGNER  
MICHAEL MURPHY

### "Direct and vague.

Sweet and ironic." That's how Grant (Sorden Present) describes *From Her* (Julie Christie), his wife of 46 years. It's also an apt cluster of adjectives for 26-year-old Sarah Polley's first feature—executive produced by her mother Atom Egoyan.

*Away From Her* details a 60-something couple handling the desperate descent into Alzheimer's. From the moment Fiona puts her chess knight in the freezer instead of the cupboard you know all bodies of the cupboard you know all bodies of, particularly in the painful context of this truly intimate and enduring relationship.

Fiona enters Blackwoodland, a retirement home with a 30-day waiting policy for relatives. There, when her husband finally goes to

wait her a month later, he discovers she no longer knows him and has developed a close platonic friendship with fellow patient Aubrey (Michael Murphy).

From here the film follows Grant's struggle to reconcile his loss, confront the latent resentments that have caused Fiona to exclude him and make the kind of brokenhearted sacrifice that inevitably breaks yours.

Polley's non-linear structure invites a deft examination of the disease, and establishes a true resonance between the central couple. She avoids wallowing in Fiona's degradation, offering instead a brave and unusual discourse on love in later life, the institutionalization of mistakes



and the celebration of the human spirit at any age.

Despite vivid cinematography and poignant music, however, *Away From Her* lacks an essential energy. It feels like a study, a series of observations and conversations. When Olympia Dukakis, as Aubrey's wife, and Kristen Thomson, as Fiona's name, ensue proceedings with their blunt rationality you realize that the film always needed more life. But then again, as Christie says, maybe the point is that

"sometimes there's something delicious in oblivion." *Seven Hayes*

**Anticipation:** # 26-year-old juggling Alzheimer's and Julie Christie? *Yes*

**Enjoyment:** Love hurts. Unconditional love hurts more. *Three*

**In Retrospect:** Incredible, majestic, monumental, *Julie said*—anything to exercise the mind? *Three*

## ALPHA DOG

ALPHA DOG  
CASTING  
BY JIMMY KIMBLE  
PRODUCTION  
DESIGNER  
JIMMY KIMBLE

BY MARK  
KISSEL

### Cocky youth Johnny

Turnover (Eddie Hirsch) runs a small-time drug business supplied by his gangster father (Bruce Willis) and backed by his middle-class home boys (including Justin Timberlake as player, Frankie). Partying to hip-hop while rocking the 'authentic' rappers they see on TV, the boys yearn to prove themselves as men. When one of their clients can't pay a debt, the gang kidnaps his younger brother in an ill-planned attempt to get their cash back.

We're told at the start of the film that it's based on real events, and there's a sense that *Casavetes* is committed to the reality of the world as he sees it. But though the murder that inspired the film is pretty shocking, his response to it is limited to finger pointing—bad parenting, area possible made the usual bogymen. Meanwhile,

his two-dimensional characters are apparently based on gossip, newspaper headlines and superficial journalism.

Where the director does surprise, however, is in scenes that stray unexpectedly into the surreal. There's a bar brawl that turns into a Kung Fu fantasy, a brilliant Spud-on-speed trip as a pilled-up employee tries to convince his boss not to sack him, a two-girls-in-a-pool teen sex dream that not even the other characters can believe.

It's as if, in creating a film about boys playing at being men, *Casavetes* has become caught up in his own characters' dilemma. Is this film supposed to be a powerful, insightful warning about the youth of today, or a bit of fun for a Saturday night?

To further muddy the waters, *Casavetes* throws in documentary-style interviews at the start and end of the film, and uses



subtlety throughout to introduce new characters with their full names and witness numbers. These interventions would offer some grounding in reality—a reminder that the consequences of these kids' actions stretch out beyond the boundaries of the film—except that they're brilliantly funny, starting Steven Seagal as a grieving mum in a fat suit.

Such a facile sign-off is entirely appropriate for a film that's funny and slick, but in

spite rather than because of its disheveled choices. *Seven Hayes*

**Anticipation:** *Justin Timberlake* as a gangster? *Yes*

**Enjoyment:** *Clayton*, really fun. *Three*

**In Retrospect:** *King Fu*, drugs, sex, fat suit. Enjoy it. *Three*

11. When you see the trailer skin I your heart kind of sink a bit? You know, like 'For fuck's sake, how many more special effects, green screen comic book week-offs do we have to put up with until somebody starts fucking making films again?'  
 12. No not at all. I liked it.  
 13. I really hated *Sin City* so I had low expectations for this film. I thought it'd be the same visual formula, but I was completely won over.  
 14. If you know Frank Miller, you can't expect anything else. He's a sensationalist, he's blood and guts, quite boyish, quite film noirish.  
 15. He's a bit of a misogynist's best friend.  
 16. He's not into character development, let's put it that way.  
 17. But I think that kind of macho camp thing is kind of appealing.

18. We're all in agreement that it's the campiest, most homoerotic film of all time, right?  
 19. Actually I didn't get that from watching it, but coming away from it, yeah, it sort of was.  
 20. But at the same time Xerxes, who was an amazing character, the attitude to him was quite homophobic too.  
 21. But along those same lines, you could also read into it a racial thing as well if you wanted to, though he seemed more black than Persian.  
 22. It's like the clashing white Spartans against the decadent, drug-loving darkness that's invading the world. But the choreography, some of the fighting moves, was quite clever. It was understated, and the hand-to-hand fighting was amazing.  
 23. The most original shot to me

- was the tracking shot of Leonidas as he was hacking his way through those Persians.  
 24. That's it! *Twilight*, *Homophobia* and *misogyny* aside, that was the bit where it kind of got to me. I was thinking, 'I haven't seen anything quite like this before'.  
 25. There were some technical boundaries that were broken.  
 26. I'm a huge Frank Miller fan, and that's like a really good adaptation of one of his comics, using all the elements that his graphic novels do.  
 27. For good and bad. I guess it didn't take itself too seriously either. It genuinely made me laugh and that's what helped me to be won over by it in the end.  
 28. For me it harked back to the first time I saw *Cosien* film *Barbarian*. It was that wonderful pure male aggression, but in a

- camp, fun way sort of like *Rocky*. The only thing that worried me about it is that it could be seen to have a political slant, given that we're having rising troubles with Iran. It makes a direct link between Western civilisation and the Persians – it fits in to the political climate.  
 29. It's not a first-class movie. There's a scene where these capes are flying in slow motion and there are rock power chords blasting out, and you're looking around making sure no one catches you going, 'Wah!' like you're 12 again.  
 30. Scores please.  
 31. 4, 4, 4  
 32. 5, 3, 2  
 33. 5, 4, 4  
 34. 3, 3, 2



## THE PAINTED VEIL

ON CANON  
REUNION

THE PAINTED VEIL  
1929  
Ed Norton  
Drama  
1929

### It's a case of love's

labours lost in this hopeless pseudo-epic that represents a staggering 12 years of wasted time since the first script was finished in 1899.

Based on the novel by W Somerset Maugham, *The Painted Veil* is set in 1920s Shanghai, where middle-class doctor Walter Frenk has spirited his vivacious young wife Kitty. No sooner have they arrived, however, than Kitty is spirited into the sick by the dashing Vice Consul Charlie Townsend.

Soon enough, Walter learns of the affair, and in a moment of jealousy gets himself posted to a cholera-riddled village in the south of the country, alongside his young and soon to be much less vivacious wife. Will love prevail? Will their marriage

survive? Will you stop laughing at the lack?

The problem with *The Painted Veil* is, um, everything. As the oh-so-English Walter, Ed Norton has all the presence of a church mouse, the squealing voice to match, and the emotional range of a Jelly Baby. Naomi Watts approaches her accent like a road side bomb, but at least the script writers had some fun actually making her claim at one point that you could knock her down with a feather.

Director John Curran shoots the gorgeous backdrop of ancient China in a gauzy half-light, muting the colours of the lush landscape to muddy greys and greens. The result is a creeping, soporific film, seemingly shot through a sleep-anesthetised lens. That such



much nonsense should pass for sweeping romance is indicative of the painful sincerity that hangs around *The Painted Veil* like a bell and chain.

In fact, it's so bad it may be about time that someone took a firm nudge of Ed Norton. Seven years after *Fight Club*, where are the great performances for which he seemed so surely destined? When did he start making 'Ed Norton' films? And when did these films become a

byword for purpose self-regard? What happened, Ed? What happened? **Seen Redhead**

**Anticipation:** Innocent when the greatest what now? **Two**

**Enjoyment:** hilariously self-important rubbish **One**

**In Retrospect:** Maybe the best we can forgive for a reason. **One**

## THE HITCHER

ON  
CANON  
REUNION

THE HITCHER  
1986  
Sean Bean, Simon  
Wright  
Thriller  
1986

### Another day, another

horror remake. In this case, it's debatable to what extent the original film deserves its 'classic' label, either way, it's highly unlikely that this new version will be remembered long enough to gain a reputation of its own – positive or otherwise.

To give credit where it's due, Meyers' update shows a few promising signs in its opening half hour. The cinematography is polished if unremarkable, while the simple two-word premise – 'killer hitchhiker' – allows for a pretty build-up, as two photographs leads finds themselves trapped with Sean Bean's gravely psyche.

As with most horror setups, there's a certain amount of pleasure to be had in placing yourself in the protagonists' shoes. Unfortunately, this enjoyment

only lasts as long as the situation remains believable, and here narrative credibility has the lifespan of a chocolate teapot.

By the final reel, Bean has transformed into a Bergen-bombed Amia, dispatching these top cars and a helicopter using only a pistol. The misjudged use of a Nine Inch Nails track only confirms what we've suspected all along: this isn't a horror film, it's a music video coupled to some fake snuff footage. **Seen Kitty**

**Anticipation:** **Seven** smoke. **Two**

**Enjoyment:** A few good scenes: **Horribly** killer **Four** **Two**

**In Retrospect:** **Shrug** **Indecent** **Two**





## An interview with Christophe Honoré, director of *Dans Paris*.

**LWLies:** How did you come up with the idea and decision to make a film in Paris?

**Honoré:** This film was a bid to take responsibility for myself as a French cineaste and filmmaker. The first two films I made were very much a reaction against being a filmmaker in France, and with this I wanted to pay homage to the last 32 or 40 years of French cinema. The second reason was the desire to work again with Louis Garrel and Roman Duran. I worked with Roman on my last film and Louis on the musical one. I wanted to show a side of them both that hadn't really been seen before.

**LWLies:** In many ways the film is a comedy about depression – is the funnier side of life always best seen through tragedy?

**Honoré:** I could become the new Woody Allen. A French Woody Allen would be very strange: there was that desire to give the film a free, more casual tone without being ironic. In all my films, I've told stories about mourning and death in the family. It's something that I've lived through in my own life, usually at my expense, so it came at the same time as I was discovering cinema and becoming a film buff and realising that I needed. Now I'm starting to become an old filmmaker, maybe with age I am able to live it better as I come from a family with a lot of brokenness. We had a way of living through that chaos with a lot of humor. I'd say it's more a film about dealing with things through humor. I don't feel that the characters are so depressed really; what characterizes the three main characters in the film is the desire they have of being abandoned a moment later. The idea was to use that emotionally within the film to see how their relationships develop and how they're still linked to this first. For me, Roman Duran's character is not really suicidal. The scene where he takes all the pills is not so much an attempt at suicide, it's more an act of courage by a terrified person.

**LWLies:** The scene in which Roman is deeply depressed and puts on a record in his bedroom, then his spirit is gradually lifted, is pretty great.

**Honoré:** It's like *Private with the Madonna* (an *Remembrance of Things Past*), he develops this sensory memory of the past. The idea of this scene is that this bit of his teenage years leads back to him. I think all English people love the movie because they're all still in love with Kate Winslet. It's funny because she came to a performance in France, and it must have been her press people saying that there's this fashionable film that was your going so you should go along. So I met Kate Winslet at the premiere and in a way it was quite moving. I didn't think when I was 15 and had a poster of her on my wall that I would then one day meet her.

**LWLies:** Is the scene autobiographical then?

**Honoré:** It is an idea from when I was 11-year-old. The first record I ever bought was Kate as *American*, but we ended up changing the song because, strangely, the first record Roman Duran ever bought was Kate's. Very funny. David Jenkins

Check out the full transcription here: [www.thefilmcritic.co.uk](http://www.thefilmcritic.co.uk)

## STRAIGHTHEADS

TURNING D'ARCY INTO A  
FRENCH FILM



### Spiff-smoking Adam

(Denny Dyer) has an easy job fitting CCTV into private residences. When, one evening, perished Alice (Gillian Anderson) arrives home to find him dozing on her desk and asks him to accompany her to a work do, he agrees – excited by the prospect of donning a tux, and the more obvious task of banging her senseless.

After a night of slugging in some trees, a moment's distraction leads to an accident in a desolate wood that leaves both of them impossibly damaged in mind and body.

What follows is a psychotic display of emotional free falling. Neither Alice nor Adam can recognize themselves with the events of that ill-fated night, try as they might to cover the scars and heal the wounds. It's only when Alice discovers her father's old army rifle in a drawer that she starts to see a new horizon.

Anderson adopts a highly commendable British accent in a

gutsy performance that adds a little more lustre to the mid-career surge she's been enjoying recently. Dyer's woebegone cockney is a little predictable, but he redeems himself in the last 20 minutes. It's here that director Gus Reed goes all out to twist the knife, in a cumulative display of cinematic shock and gore that feels very close to personal abuse.

*Straightheads* is not to be taken lightly. It's dirty, horrific and upsetting, but it hits you in a way that, sometimes, cinema should. *Merika Fajeh*

**Reception:** William Anderson has put a run of small, quality films together. *Three*

**Enjoyment:** Year 13 winner, orange and stick your fingers in your ears. *Three*

**In Retrospect:** Right we say it so now. *Three*



## DANS PARIS

CRUISED  
STARRING  
LOUIS GARREL  
AND JONATHAN COHEN

by  
Chris Nash

### The fourth film from

French writer-director Christophe Honoré has a charm that unfolds slowly. What begins as a jumble of interactions with no clear chronology coalesces into a very family drama about two brothers and their father struggling to get along without the women (absentee wife, late sister, ex-girlfriend) that they loved.

Louis Garrel is, as usual, luminous. In a doe-eyed Celtic way, even when playing Jonathan—a student who skips school to sleep with these girls in a single day. He's turned out of his room when older brother Paul (Jonathan Cohen) returns to the coop after ending a stormy relationship with a long-

time belle, and while Jon's getting laid, Paul is mostly staring at the walls and contemplating suicide. Their father (Guy Marchand) tries to provide advice, discipline and chicken soup, but is mostly left stranded on the sidelines.

Jonathan's free-spirited energy, a foil to Paul's gloom and the cramped confusion of the apartment, keeps the tone light. Speeded-up sequences of him fooling around with an ex—pretending to ice skate on a concrete surface, playing blind men's bluff in the gardens of a stately home—nail moments from French New Wave's like *Truffaut* and *Rivette* in tone and technique, smoking and arguing while naked? Check. Boba-style credits set to

a skittering jazz beat? Uh-huh.

But *Dans Paris* is more than just an homage to classic cinema. Inventive touches include Jonathan's opening narration ("I'm aware of the intently embarrassing odor of one who dares to speak directly to the audience," he says, speaking directly to the audience) and a recreation scene in which Paul and his ex-girlfriend Anna sing an impromptu (but perfectly rhyming) duet over the phone to each other.

And yet there's a deep sadness at the film's core, which bubbles to the surface when Paul opens up to his brother's rejected ex-girlfriend: "I think we grossly underestimate our sorrow," he tells her. "We always del. of sadness,

eventually." Thankfully the ending is more like a *Wonderful Life* than *Requiem for a Dream*, and the theme of depression and loss is truly spilling sight. **A- (see release)**

**Anticipation:** Strong actors, but *Brooklyn* is a gut-wrenching track record. **Two**

**Enjoyment:** Easy and satisfying like a post-critical *Gilmore*. **Four**

**In Retrospect:** They're saying he's the national hero in the French New Wave crowd. They might be right. **Four**

## SUNSHINE

ROCKY HORROR  
MEETS  
SCIENCE FICTION

ROCKY HORROR  
MEETS  
SCIENCE FICTION  
ROCKY HORROR  
MEETS  
SCIENCE FICTION

### Fifty years in the

future, our sun is dying. Mankind's solution is to deliver a nuclear bomb into its heart, jump-starting it back into action. The first spaceship entrusted with the mission has failed. Nobody knows why. Will the second attempt be more successful?

Anybody expecting an Armageddon-style action romp, be warned: *Sunshine*'s closer to the meditative spirit of Steven Soderbergh's *Solaris*, or perhaps, in its tight-knit claustrophobia, Ridley Scott's *Alien*. Less agreeably, in its creature-feature final act, it strays worryingly close to Paul W.S. Anderson's *Event Horizon*—but let's not worry about that for now.

Let's concentrate on *Sunshine*'s techno-babble authenticity, the realism of the superb sets and the fact that the geeks have inherited the earth. Our glucky crew consists of, among others, a physicist, a shrink and a maffia boss, complete with tank hair and yellow skin. Their unlikelyness—their very lack of heroism—adds a sense of robust reality to the film.

This is really Danny Boyle's most complex work to date, conceived on an epic canvas, but balanced with quirky details: camera angles and a raw intelligence. At its best, *Sunshine* is terrifying because Boyle gets what space will do to you. Space is a vast, empty monolith that sometimes sits at the back of your mind,

always there, always reminding you of its indifferent, inescapable magnitude. The scene in which two crew members have to go out there—but there—is a vertigo-inducing glimpse into infinity that's far more shocking than, well, that last half hour for starters.

"Hell is other people", said Jean-Paul Sartre, only, as *Sunshine* amply demonstrates, it's not. Hell is the mind-bending infinitude of space, which will eat through your soul like corrosive acid. But the third act sees that festering internal horror take the shape of a violent

intruder, and the film descends into a series of urgently and unlikely chase sequences. In this case, other people turn out to be a hellish let down.

Where *Sunshine* had cranked up the tension badly, it ends in a frenzied attack of blunt brute force. And though it's still viscerally reviling, and Boyle makes smart use of light as a substitute for the darkness of horror cliché, this is not the ending that the film needed or deserved. Set to say, it rather mims on *Sunshine*'s parade. *Catching*

*Anticipation.* They're on a mission to bomb the sun. Sounds badass. Not great! *Theme*

*Enjoyment.* Hokey, over-the-top that creeps under your skin and stays there. *Four*

*In Retrospect.* Why, oh why did it have to end like that? But, even with the disappointing finale, you'll still want to see this for its stunning first hour. *Two*







## DAYS OF GLORY

THEY'VE BEEN  
FIGHTING  
AND LOSING  
FOR YEARS

### Avid cinema-goers

have every right to feel like they've been through their own multi-front campaign in recent months. There have been two tours of two lines, multiple excursions into Iraq, even a vicious scrap in the mountains of Afghanistan with Russia's 9th Company. Now this. Maybe it's time to get a camper van and head for Canada.

But wait, Rachid Bouchene's *Days of Glory* isn't any old war movie, is it? This story of Algerian soldiers in de Gaulle's Free French army has all the ingredients of a post-colonial cluster bomb – the racial tension, the historical revisionism and the blood and guts glory of a good old-fashioned war epic. And here it arrives unflinching and edifying, just as France once again picks over the

wreckage of its race riots. Once more into the breach it is, then.

Only hang on a sec. You thought that a film about Algerian soldiers dying on French soil would be an angry, grim and grimy tale of colonial cynicism and heartless sacrifice. And so it is, sort of. Our protagonists – quickly Said and his mates Yassin, Mezzoud and Abdelkader – are noble villagers who suffer untold horrors. They are gunned down on mountains, their sandaled feet freeze in foxholes, and even after being welcomed as liberators, they are kept segregated from the white population, especially the chicks.

But Bouchene doesn't appear to be that angry. Oh, he's ticked off about it, alright, but you were expecting him to pick up the mantle of Gillo Pontecorvo's *The*

*Battle of Algiers*, a neo-realist masterpiece that knows a thing or two about righteous anger. Except Bouchene has other things on his mind. "I wanted to make a film," he says, "not a documentary." And so he has – not just any film, in fact, but the same damn war film that everybody else has already made, featuring the same damn iconography, the same damn chivalry, the same damn brothers-in-arms bullshit.

Rachid Bouchene has made a Hollywood film that has next to nothing to say about potentially fascinating subjects such as the Muslim experience of World War II, and which demonstrates little of its specifically North African roots or colour. Yes, *Days of Glory* is awash with technical film and well-staged battle sequences, but it's so firmly rooted in the

soil of Spielberg that its attempts to say anything meaningful are beguiled by the fact that it's just, well, so damn sick. Blame it on the saturation of the war bore genre, but perhaps it's time the whole lot of them got a dishonourable discharge (see reviews).

**Anticipation:** The reception at Cannes suggested this was a timely companion piece to *The Battle of Algiers*. **Fear**

**Enjoyment:** Proud and polished, it probes all the conventional war movie buttons. **Three**

**In Retrospect:** Doesn't this suggest to be a timely companion piece to *The Battle of Algiers*? **Two**

## THE CATMAN

More than 10 years after *THUNDERBOLT*, Neri Marcorè returns to the screen with *The Catman*.

THE WORLD with *it*.

### In his 1998 film

*Aperta*, Italy's foremost cine-dieist Neri Marcorè weighed the importance of civic duty against untethered artistic whimsy. Neri, should a director in a position of notoriety use his skills to make a sober, timeless documentary on the sour state of politics in Italy or follow an insatiable ambition to make a '50s-style musical about a Trotskyite poetry chef?

With *The Catman*, Marcorè has his poetry and eats it by successfully combining deep-set political grievances with conventional family high jinx. The story centers on neurotic B-pox producer Bruno Bonome (Marcorè's alter-ego of choice, Silvio Berlusconi) who unintentionally accepts a script from single

mother Teresa (Jeannine Trevis) that turns out to be a scathing critique of ex-mogul-in-chief Silvio Berlusconi.

Destined funding by state broadcaster RAI, Bruno spends the film fishing money from various sources while trying to determine whether his schlock roasts would terrify such a noble enterprise... all the while becoming increasingly awestruck from his wife and children.

While the doomed production overruns in and out of the red proceedings, we tastelessly deigned with archive snippets of Berlusconi making an ass out of himself at the European Parliament... but the difficulties of making a film critical of a ruling party are writ large.

Perils are drawn between the break-down of the family unit

and the country's moral decline under their selfish leader, but just like the spineless lefties upon whom Marcorè places his faith, *The Catman* fails to inject urgency into the issues at hand. Precious little of his radical political agenda manages to hit the target, with the only really routing moment in the film arriving when Marcorè himself (playing an actor) assumes the role of his nemesis, portraying him with a mixture of delirious charm and diabolical malice.

While the film's political intentions are clear, as drama it doesn't flow well. There's an uneasy relationship between the film and the film-within-a-film, and the plotting too often wavers between the intimate and garbled. There is also very little of the director's movement bonhomie,

which may disappoint long-time fans hoping for the odd comedy aside.

Still, this is no undeniably sophisticated piece of work which, in its own small way, may even have contributed to ousting Berlusconi from office. Maybe next time, a little less Trotsky and a little more poetry will do the trick. **Dave Karger**

**RECEPTION:** Wouldn't miss a frame from that wonderful Italian. **Four**

**Enjoyment:** Where's all the fuss? **Three**

**In Retrospect:** Slightly overkill, with more depth than most directors achieve in a lifetime. **Four**



# SCOTT WALKER: 30 CENTURY MAN

WALKER'S  
RECORDING  
STUDIO  
IN  
NEW YORK

WALKER

**Given the weight of** perhaps, comparison between Stephen Kijak's study of Scott Walker and Martin Scorsese's recent Dylan documentary, *No Direction Home*, is inescapable. Both films are biographies rather than biopics proper, as much concerned with two enigmatic bodies of work as with the enigmatic songwriters behind them.

But whereas Dylan is an enigma who deals in riddles and self-mythologising, Walker is a bona fide recluse—sequestered and seldom interviewed. All of which makes *Scott Walker: 30 Century Man* an intriguing prospect, albeit one that is, sadly, barely realised.

As with *No Direction Home*, Kijak's film is a smorgasbord of talking heads, archive footage, and most notably interviews

with the subject himself. Also, notwithstanding some fascinating insights from collaborators including Evan Parker and Ed Bicknell, we are largely subjected to 'tense' like Gordon Allern and filling empty viewing 'lyrical' about a man they've never even met. Given Eric thinks Walker's 1995 album *Tilt* is great, but Marc Almond reckons it was a piece of crap, etc. It's hardly insightful stuff.

Archive footage of Walker, meanwhile, is in shorter supply than was Dylan's: a problem overcome wholly unsatisfactorily by lots of hedge-crockerwork and Graham Wood's sub-Tinane motion pictures.

Which leaves us with the divine machine that is Walker's own interviews and accompanying studio footage, occasionally revelatory (not least newsreel



images of Mussolini's wife Claretta Petacci's corpse), and at all times devoid of Dylan-esque doublethink. A pity, then, that Kijak—clearly himself a fan—makes for such a deferential interviewer.

The problem here is that one can't easily glean insight from an enigma without somehow debunking those enigmatic qualities that the whole career purports to celebrate. To do so requires a lightness of touch that Kijak palpably fails to muster. To his credit, the director lends some well-timed punches, but without ever really clenching

his fists. This is an intelligent but clumsy affair. Andrew Sutherland

**Anticipation...** Having mystery made manifest on film for the first time. **Four**

**Enjoyment...** Now, that's actually a Scott Walker—but why's he being asked such ballcock questions? And what the fuck is *Sting* doing here? **Three**

**In Retrospect...** Never need a key to do a man's job. **Two**

## A Q&A with Stephen Kijak, director of *Scott Walker: 30 Century Man*.

**WLW:** What drew you to Scott as a subject?

**Kijak:** It was in 1990 when someone released the *May Club* compilation. At that point, you couldn't get his solo albums on CD and I had never heard his before. I heard 'The Old Man's Back Again' from *Scott 4*, and everything in it was when I was into music, so I wanted to travel through the back catalogue and become a collector.

**WLW:** When did you first see Scott in a cinematic light?

**Kijak:** The idea to do the film came a decade or so later when *Tilt* came out. It had always been very cinematic music for me so it seemed a logical step to take. I always knew I had to do something with that music but could never quite come up with the form. I started to write a screenplay at one point that was structured with his songs, but nothing ever quite worked. It was going to be a road movie. It was ridiculous, so I checked it out. Then I heard that he was about to go into the studio to make a new record and at just around like the perfect opportunity someone should document this process.

**WLW:** Photographers had never been allowed in the studio to film Scott recording before. How were you able to swing it?

**Kijak:** It was a real miracle. It was a really long process of building a relationship with the engineers and then, via

them, with Scott. We only used collaborators that jived with his creative world—first one, who is an incredible director in his own right, had filmed Scott's *Wildfire* at the South End Centre in Leeds. He had experience of Greek and a secure following has served so that really helped. It was a case of building up the project in a way that would make him comfortable given that we were trying to pay attention to his creative likes and dislikes.

**WLW:** Was the film intended for fans of Scott or for people who aren't so familiar with his work?

**Kijak:** We were really trying to balance the knowledge of a fan with someone who was discovering him for the first time. It was always going to be hard as his catalogue was polarised people, and even within the people who love him, you've got those who love the old stuff and hate the new stuff. We spoke to some people like the French composer Hector Benoit who was only around listening to the albums from *Tilt* onwards. What I wanted to do was just to focus on the songwriting and try to make a film that was a portion of a man's work through his life: we didn't just want to make a puff piece, but then it is hard to find people who have a hard word to say about Scott Walker. David Jephson

Check out the full transcript online: [www.itskewallnews.co.uk](http://www.itskewallnews.co.uk)

# LIGHTS IN THE DUSK

LENNART HEIKKILÄ  
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY  
JANNE HYÖNÄ  
COSTUME DESIGNER

THE LEADERS  
KOSKINEN

## Taking deadpan into

as yet anchored territory. *Lights in the Dusk* is a bitmossy study of loneliness from Finnish maestro Aki Kaurismäki that rounds off his 'Loose Trilogy' after *Drifting Clouds* and *The Man Without a Past*.

Koskinen (Janne Hyytiäinen) is a guard at a small shopping mall who dreams of one day starting his own high-tech security business. His only friends are the dishevelled proprietor of a fast food van (Matti Haanpää) and a peckish of trusty rolling tobacco. Then, out of nowhere, a former sailor (Matti Järvelin) working for a local crime syndicate asks

him out on a date. It quickly becomes clear to everyone but our hero that her motives are less than benign.

The title alludes to the twilight vistas of Helsinki (gorgeously captured by DoP Timo Seppänen) and the faint glimmer of hope in Koskinen's life as an otherwise crippling solitude claws at his prospects for future contentment. Indeed, everything that can go wrong does go wrong, as his humble existence is shattered simply because he's not a particularly personable fellow. Respite does eventually muscle its way through the

gloominess, but it's blink-and-you'll-miss-it stuff.

The film's conversational pace perfectly complements Hyytiäinen's anti-acting style. His facial expressions remain harshly neutral throughout, making Koskinen's eventual half-smile at the film's down-at-heart denouement all the more rewarding.

On occasion the dialogue is delivered so sturdily (with deliberate, extended pauses between each sentence) that it feels as if the characters are actually reading the subtitles as they come on screen. The soundtrack, too, attenuates

Kaurismäki's usual eclectic mix of old-time rock 'n' roll and contemporary Finnish pop to cement the film's oddball milieu. **Dave Karger**

**ANTICIPATION:** ■  
great director who makes great films **B+**

**Enjoyment:** cool, funny and beautiful all in one **B+**

**In retrospect:** fills its niche to perfection, but it's a small niche indeed. **Three**



## HALF NELSON

THE MOVIE  
BY JEFF LABRECQUE

RYAN REYNOLDS  
GOSLING  
DANIEL CRAIG  
DANIEL CRAIG  
DANIEL CRAIG

### "This song's called

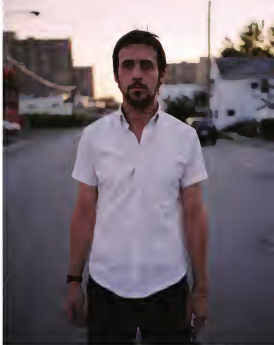
'Half Nelson.'" blares teacher Den Dunnes (Ryan Gosling) alarm-clock radio, "for when you're feeling kinda stuck."

Working in a rundown inner-city Brooklyn school, Den wants to teach his pupils more than just the bog-standard curriculum. With his earnest ideas and alternative weeps, he tries to encourage the kids to think for themselves. So far, so *Gorgeous Minds*.

But, like his approach to teaching, Den's life isn't textbook. His out-of-hours drug taking starts to blur increasingly into work, so much so that mood-up 13-year-old student Drey (Shreeya Epps) finds him wheeled out on crack in the school toilets. This leads surprisingly to a tentative friendship.

Half Nelson is a muddled world of morals where nothing is clear-cut. Den and Drey's friendship is a confused one—probably appropriate (is he awakening the first hint of her young sexuality?), but it works. Drey's generous home-life doesn't help, and it's exacerbated by the attentions of local drug dealer Frank (a stiletto turn from Anthony Mackie) who, despite offering to help, hardly has her best interests at heart.

Inner-city high school dramas of late have a reputation for abrupt edits and sharp shocks, but Fleck determinedly takes his time. His carefully measured and contemplative approach—keenly capturing the off-key moments of his characters—coupled with the truly outstanding performance of



Gosling, assures *Half Nelson* is a cut above your average coming-of-age, inspirational school schmelz.

With his scruffy edges, amiable demeanor and genuine desire to do some good, it's pretty impossible not to fall for Den's easy-going, if self-destructive, charm. Ryan Gosling is compelling as the confused teacher, and it's his ability to break your heart and make you smile in a single moment that resonates.

Half Nelson, if anything, is glib. It's not afraid to throw up questions it can't answer, managing to be both honest and earnest, without being overwhelmingly sincere. You have to admire Fleck's decision to show the correlation between the drinking habits of the middle-classes and the sale of drugs on the street, even if it is rudimentary. Most of all, *Half Nelson* has heart, a big thumping heart, and for that

reason it can't fail. **Ryan Gosling**

**Anticipation:** A high school drama with edge. **Interesting:** Three

**Enjoyment:** Open. **Awakening reader:** student. **Performance:** Simple as Pie

**In Retrospect:** Staring stuff. *Half Nelson* has heart and balls. **Four**

## MUTUAL APPRECIATION

Andrew Bujalski  
returns with  
his first feature  
film, *Mutual  
Appreciation*

BY JEFF LABRECQUE

### Would-be indie king,

Andrew Bujalski, returns with another piece of hipster making. It's time about the generational misfire of a group of 20-somethings who wonder if they'll ever feel like real adults.

Justin Rice (real-life singer/guitarist with New York rockers Bishop Allen) plays Alan Peoples, singer/guitarist with indie-pop outfit The Bantlebees, who moves from Boston to Brooklyn to find success. He stumbles in and out of parties, plays the odd gig, expresses his dislike of "math-rock" and shares a moment with his best friend's girlfriend (Ellie) all of it photographed in tastefully

grungy black-and-white.

Though Bujalski's first film *Funny We Broke*, managed to find its own voice from the outset, *Mutual Appreciation* begins with a series of painfully more conversations that scream of genre cliché. Moreover, the film struggles with its pacing, pretending to a halt during one of Alan's trendy parties. But it's also here of its most painfully uncomfortable, that the film begins to come alive.

Indeed, patient viewers will be amply rewarded as Bujalski's strengths come to the fore. He understands the awkwardness of Alan and Ellie's relationship



between them and shows his sensitivity in a scene of arm-throwing struggles that's so palpable it hurts.

True, after his impressive debut, *Mutual Appreciation* feels like a minor setback for the director. But if it's too much to expect a masterpiece from a second feature, one thing's for sure: Andrew Bujalski is destined to make it big. **Frances Hursey**

**Anticipation:** A contender for Dan Snierson's crown? **Four**

**Enjoyment:** The anxiety eventually makes way for an actual audience. **Four**

**In Retrospect:** Painfully real — but that's a good thing. **Four**

## PERFECT STRANGER

THE PERFECT STRANGER

Halle Berry's first movie since *Monster's Ball*

### The great thing

about contemporary women's cinema is that we are entitled to be angry and survive, unlike '40s female-centric cinema where the female — the woman you identify with, wish to emulate and admire for her feisty ways — was ultimately punished for her transgression and killed off, or at least rendered by marriage or submission.

Well, move over feminisms. Because *Perfect Stranger* is only Halle Berry's movie and one that makes her a strong woman in every sense — from career to sexuality to her ability to confront the man in her life — falls at the first fence the dog. To say more is to spoil, but it's a very

disappointing level that leaves us with just another mad woman in the attic.

Ria (Berry) is a fast-track journalist in NYC with a rough, tough skeleton in Miles (Giovanni Ribisi). When their affluents to bring down a senator for homosexual hypocrisy are pulled by the paper, Ria takes an enforced holiday.

Enter a skeleton from her closet: her childhood neighbour, with a sleazy sex scandal lead on top advertising exec Herman Hill (Bruce Willis, here shot from eyebrows down to avoid reading her face). When said friend ends up a stiff, Ria tempers at Herman's agency, and approaches him as online best to nail her to the murder.



Aside from enough red herrings to make a very satisfactory breakfast, this is only watchable because Berry is believable, convincing, sex on a stick and matched by the ever "interesting" Ribisi. Not that men come out of this any better. It has to be said: Be it Harry Miles, Ria's ex-Cameron or her abusive father, the only conclusion to draw from *Perfect Stranger* is that women are mental and bloody are simply a bundle of lying pervs. **Loren Hayes**

**Anticipation:** Halle Berry and Bruce Willis? A match made in movie hell. **Two**

**Enjoyment:** Berry gives good scary **Three**

**In Retrospect:** One somebody please give me of Hollywood's post-*Monster's Ball* woman: a vehicle worthy of her talents. **Two**

## What do you get for the man who has everything?

Nothing. All you can do is start taking things away from him. Meet Edmond (William H. Macy), a married with his easy, upper-middle-class life, desperate for experience and the thrill of seduction — responsibility. After consulting a fortune-teller, he leaves his wife and goes looking for some action on the seedy streets of NYC.

But despite his best efforts, Edmond fails to find the sexual release he thinks he needs until he comes across a naive waitress (Julie Stiles). She indulges his

prejudices and unwittingly releases a dark side that leads him down the road to insanity.

It's difficult to go wrong with William H. Macy. In *Edmond* he is, as always, engaging and convincing as a character with enough schizotypic flux to bamboozle lesser actors. His finest scenes are those with Julie Stiles who brings a nervous tension to what could have been a farcical relationship.

But despite fine performances, *Edmond* never quite coheres. Adopted by David Mamet from his own play, it always feels like a

stage production that happens to have been caught on film. Much of the dialogue possesses a kind of Brechtian-esque frisson that sounds fresh and snappy in a theatrical atmosphere, but seems unnatural and ill-fitting on screen.

The problem with the dialogue reveals a more fundamental confusion. President points about the human condition that Edmond struggles to impart are undermined by the fact that he is, first and foremost, totally nuts. By the end of the film he finds some sort of understanding and resolution, but the audience

can't get to the end of the journey with him. You're left searching for a message that perhaps just isn't there.

Jonathan Wilkins

**Anticipation.** Macy and Mamet — a double threat. **B+**

**Enjoyment.** Taking away rankings of a motion, but what does it all mean? **Three**

**In retrospect** You are not where you belong. Stick to the theater. **Two**






# Shane's World

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## An interview with Ray Lawrence, director of *Jindabyne*.

**LW** *What attracted you to your source material, Raymond Carver's *So Much Water, So Close To Home*?*

**Lawrence** I think it was mainly the notion of responsibility. It was only a very small story but it had some very big themes, and that enabled us to bring a lot of other things on at the same time. I found it interesting. I also wanted to make it an Australian story about Australian characters.

**LW** *The film certainly has a lot to say about the racial and social climate in Australia.*

**Lawrence** It's a pretty emotional element of my work. We are a very multicultural country and it was important to me that the character of Frank [Gerald Byrne] was Irish. I wanted a parallel with the Aboriginal experience, not only in terms of being oppressed, but in terms of the Irish being early inhabitants of the country.

**LW** *What part does the film's setting play?*

**Lawrence** It's a mountain area and is Aboriginal, outside the highest park in the landscape as the most magnificent because they can see their country and their land. The word "jindabyne" actually means valley, and the town was founded and is now under water. This gives the notion of ghosts and the notion of things from your past returning to haunt you. Claire's ghost was her suffering from post-natal depression and, at least as far as I know as measured, the resultant abandonment of her son.

**LW** *Your characters are often confronted by moral dilemmas, and this film is no exception.*

**Lawrence** It's the root of all drama. A good moral dilemma is something that anybody can identify with and understand. Confronting your characters with those moral complexities is a wonderful way of providing discussion. I've had discussions with people that have seen *Jindabyne*, and they've seen things in it that I never even knew were there. That perhaps makes the film that much more dense. I deliberately wanted to push the structure and the storytelling in *Jindabyne* so that there were deliberate pauses and, resultantly, room for interpretation.

**LW** *Was there increased strain on you because of the success of *Lawrence*, and are you able to distance yourself from such pressures?*

**Lawrence** The fact that it was successful did in some ways make *Jindabyne* harder for me because I also had to deal with repression. I very much like the idea of going into a film without knowing too much about it's about. I even like the idea of then coming out of it and not being too sure, of having to think about it, to ponder what the spectator has just seen. I honestly just try to make the film that I would like to see. I totally trust and respect the audience and I don't want to let them down by suddenly trying to please them too much. **JOAN MARCUS**

## SHOOTER

### After a few years

ducking the issue, Hollywood has made a breakthrough: Issa in a couple of references to the Middle East, and watch as your nondescript action product is treated with Meaning, Relevance and a little bit of that box office holy dust.

So here we are with Marine sniper Bob (Kevin Costner), Jerry, Sergeant Bob (Mark Wahlberg) is a good guy—he believes in "body" and walks around in slow motion while US flags flutter in the background.

But Bob is in the shit. After his buddy got whacked in Vietnam, Jerry, Iraq, sorry, Ethiopia, Bob went off Deer Hunter for a few years until being pulled out of retirement by Colonel Lucas Johnson (Dennis Quaid). There's a plot to kill the prez, you see, and only Bob can save the day because the government has been "parasitoid" (which, as Bob, the arch-conspirator, might say, makes a change from their fucking us).

If nothing else, Mark Wahlberg (buff, bimbos, benignly flexible)

proves that inside every peace-loving democrat is a homicidal totalitarian just itching to bust out. "Justice doesn't always prevail," says one of the suits—no, but fortunately violence solves everything.

Director Antoine Fuqua has been caught uneasily between the action mayhem of Michael Bay, and the presidential machine of Michael Mann. The result is a film that, a couple of set pieces aside, doesn't convince on either count.

This is yet another contemporary action movie that cynically exploits important events for its own ends. While the money and star power drawn at the screen are seductive, let justice prevail: give *Shooter* a miss. **Max Rockwell**

**Anticipation...** One for the boys; probably. **Yes**

**Enjoyment...** One for the younger boys. **Yes**

**In Retrospect...** A shame he isn't a clothing. **Yes**



## JINDABYNE

Directed by  
Ray Lawrence

Starring  
Gabriel Byrne  
Laura Linney  
David Wenham  
and others

### During an outback

barbecue even with tension, Stewart Kene (Gabriel Byrne) receives a full-frontal punch to his face. It produces the best bloody nose you've ever seen – splattered scarlet, uncontrollable bleeding, raw and painful, visceral and deserved. And this is *Jindabyne* – there is no holding back from men's relationship with himself, others or the powerful.

Director Ray Lawrence began the discourse between men and nature in *Lantana*, where the discovery of a woman's body exposed as a small community. Here, he both continues and expands. A beautiful Aboriginal woman is brutally murdered. Her body is found floating in the Australian wilderness by a

band of local blokes on their annual fishing trip. Instead of immediately reporting it and returning back to Jindabyne and their families, they tussle up the corpse, continue fishing and report their discovery on the way back.

The act is stupid and selfish but the moral and ethical corruption it implies, and the inherent racism, only hit home when they return to be vilified by all around them. Particularly affected is Stewart's wife Claire (Laura Linney), and it's their estrangement, abusive relationship and distressed history that rightly take narrative precedence. Claire's journey is fascinating. Her ambivalence towards motherhood, her conflict with her mother-in-law, her relationship to the village

around her and the sexism inherent in the small-town community provide disturbing contemporary obstacles.

In truth every aspect of *Jindabyne* is uneasy, razor sharp, dark and vivid. Each scene is undercut with potential danger; death and grief and love and depression are gnarls snaking their way through the most haunting depictions of landscape.

*Jindabyne* was originally a town, flooded by a dam and then rebuilt around the lake that buried it. At low tide sometimes the church spire can be seen and the ghosts of inhabitants past form a current beneath the surface. It's a clear metaphor for a community suffocating itself, characters unable to be freed

from their baggage and ever dwarfed and dominated by the landscape around them. It's a metaphor for all things difficult and overwhelming in life, and the bell that rings from the church spire sure rings true. Perhaps that's why it makes a rather bloody awful noise. *Letter Hayes*

**Anticipation:** What's taken Lawrence so long? We loved *Lantana*. *Four*

**Enjoyment:** This is a really dark and chilling psychodrama. *Four*

**In Retrospect:** Wholly steeped with you and your thinking. *Home, mixer, moustache, four*. *Four*



## MAGICIANS

CASTING BY  
JAMES GUNTER  
WRITTEN BY  
David Mitchell  
David Webb  
DIRECTED BY  
James GUNTER

CASTING BY  
JAMES GUNTER

### Whether you go and

see *Magicians* depends on the answer to one simple question: what do you think of Mitchell and Webb? You know the 'Hello, I'm a Mac. And I'm a PC' guys. Okay, so that wasn't funny. It was hugely annoying. In fact, it would have had Bill Hicks burning his Peep Show Series One box set in righteous fury while spewing out big chunks of his own lung.

Then again, people are a lot more understanding now. Why shouldn't entertainers grab a slice of the advertising pie if they can? Come on, we live in a world where Jack White chooses to do a Coca-Cola ad. Even the hardcore followers of the Hicks School of Thought would forgive the boys

their fully after one pre-benefit viewing of the mighty *Peep Show* — a sitcom so well written and enjoyably British that you can almost imagine a world untouched by Friends.

So, on balance Mitchell and Webb are funny. Throw in the creative minds of *Peep Show* writers Jesse Armstrong and Ben Bain, and *Magicians* has the potential to be a slice of first comedy gold. Considering their brilliant subversion of the tired rules behind badly formulaic, the setup offered by a world populated by ridiculous men like Elaine Brown and little Paul Daniels should offer guaranteed hilarity.

The story revolves around two feuding magicians in

competition following the death of a loved one in a trick gone wrong (so far, so *Prestige* — well spotted you, postmodern eagle that you are). The problem is, well, it's just not that funny. It's as if Armstrong and Bain have had personality transplants and, with the prospect of a feature-length film suddenly decided to write a series of weak one-liners.

Without much to work with, Mitchell and Webb revert to their cheek and cheese Mac-isms. Their size, shugs, idiosyncrasies and long-standing chemistry are revealed to be powerless in the shadow of a script that plumps for rubbish denses, crap sex jokes and a stretched-sitcom mentality. Yes, there are some hearty

chuckles to be had but, really, *Peep Show* this is not. *Awful*. *Awful*.

**Anticipation:** Mitchell and Webb go big, but will they be able to pull it off? *None*.

**Enjoyment:** Despite a couple of moments that recall the best of their small screen antics, no, it seems that they can't. *None*.

**In retrospect:** Oh dear. Are we ever this much magicians baited yet? Good, now where's that copy of *Peep Show* on DVD? *None*.

## REIGN OVER ME

REIGN OVER ME  
CASTING  
DIRECTOR  
JAMES HAMILTON  
ON THE  
SET OF THE FILM

EXCLUSIVE

### Five years after the

town's fall, Hollywood has finally cottoned on to the emotional mileage of 9/11, and if it's good enough for Oliver Stone, so too must it be for America's clean pease: Adam Sandler.

But viewers expecting *Dude, Where's My Car?* might be surprised to find Sandler ditching the fart gags and sharpening it up Jim Carrey-style. He's done it before with moderate success, but this time-ay indie sees his acting muscles stretched well beyond their limits.

The film centers on wealthy Manhattanite Alan Johnson (Don Cheadle), a bored family man who one day runs into his college roommate Charlie Fineman (Sandler). Fineman's wife and daughters were killed on 9/11, and he has never accepted his grief, regressing instead into a sullen man-child. Fineman helps the uptight Johnson rediscover his inner bloke, and in turn Johnson helps his friend escape this emotional penitentiary.

Sandler's monotonous angry guy schtick was used to great effect in *Punch-Drunk Love*; but it doesn't cut it here. This level of mean turnoff requires more than his one-note performance, and the film becomes flat and dull because of it.

Though Cheadle is fine as the straight man, by the time Sandler has his obligatory heavy breakdown your patience will long since have

evaporated. Also the film continues sinking into a mire of unlikely coincidences and implausible courtroom scenes as Fineman's lawyers try to have him convicted.

Most problematic, though, is the role that 9/11 plays in the film. Fineman didn't need to lose his family like this; for all the relevance it hits to the plot, they might as well have died in a car crash.

As a metaphor, it's disturbingly

empty—unlike Fineman, America addresses its grief with an embarrassing regularity through memorial monuments, Oprah specials and international warlike *Reign Over Me* music that day in September with bloodthirsty cyclists; as a device to imbue a shallow TV movie with self-important socio-political depth. Finally, fart gags would have been more appropriate. Ben Brown

**Anticipation:** Adam Sandler does 9/11. The *Apocalypse Now* One

**Enjoyment:** Cheadle is watchable, but boredom sets in long before it ends. **Ten**

**In Retrospect:** Overlong, unnecessary and overwhelmingly cynical. **Ten**





## ZODIAC

ANTICIPATION: **THE**

THE CITY OF VIOLENCE: **THE**

### With *Zodiac*, director

David Fincher returns to the serial killer territory of his earlier *Seven* but forgoes that film's flamboyance to take a sober, methodical approach to the real-life case of a murderer who terrorized the San Francisco Bay area in the '60s and '70s.

A two-and-a-half-hour-long saga spanning four decades, it charts the efforts of four men to uncover the identity of the killer (Gregory Heiser) played here

by John Gyllenhaal; homicide crime reporter Paul Avery (Robert Downey Jr.) and homicide inspectors Dave Toschi (Mark Ruffalo) and William Armstrong (Anthony Edwards).

Aside from the case itself, *Zodiac* focuses on the disastrous consequences it had on these men's lives. Gregory became estranged from his family; Avery descended into booze-addled decrepitude and Toschi was investigated by internal affairs.

However, to suggest that the *Zodiac* case was the main reason for the deterioration in their surroundings seems like a simplification. Toschi was already a drunkard long before the *Zodiac* murders, while Gregory already had a failed marriage behind him. What's more, Fincher is so intent on examining in every minute detail of the investigation that he never takes time to flesh out the characters and their personal lives, and with little detail of what

these four men are living as a result of their involvement in the case the story is never truly affecting.

This focus on the minutiae of the police procedure over the personal lives of those consumed by it makes *Zodiac* feel like a missed opportunity. The real question one would like answered, or at least explored, is why the case became an almost existential quest for a divorced cartoonist to the point that he sacrificed his

second marriage to it. As it is, *Zodiac* is no more than a rather conventional whodunit.

On the surface, the frustrating investigation of the case—the killer has never been identified conclusively—may set it apart from the rest of cinema of standard Hollywood fare that, bogged down by its preoccupation with the perils of the case, *Zodiac* fails to come to life convincingly in spite of its slick visuals and careful period reconstruction. **Verdict: Boring**

**Anticipation:** Seven director takes on unsolved serial killer case. **Four**

**Enjoyment:** Lots of twists and turns, but ultimately empty. **Two**

**In retrospect:** Mostly tedious. By all the President's Men, but not a patch on *Ken*. **Two**

## THE CITY OF VIOLENCE

THE CITY OF VIOLENCE: **THE**

THE CITY OF VIOLENCE: **THE**

### Tae-su is a tough

detective working in Seoul who returns to the town he grew up in to attend the funeral of childhood friend Wang-pil. He begins to investigate the murder and soon realizes that organized crime is involved, so he reluctantly accepts the help of his friend Seok-wan and the two set out to find the killer.

Of course it's all about the spectacular fight sequences, and *Ryoo Seung-wan* does not disappoint. There's a running battle in a river accompanied by cheery Asian pop, a brilliant street fight with gangs of BMX riders, break dancing 15-boys and a group of 34 Tinseltown-style hoochie girls, and a climactic fight sequence as the pair battle their way to the bad guy's inner sanctum. It follows a familiar structure but it looks completely original, with fast cuts, unusual scenes within scenes, sequences and what seems like an enormous cast of incredibly energetic stunt kids.

Such frantic action and stylized direction may be partly to blame

for the plot losing itself half way through, and the onslaught of chops and spinning kicks does wear thin. But for the dedicated fan there's much to like here.

Director Ryoo Seung-wan plays polished Seok-wan, while fight choreographer Jung Do-hong is Tae-su. Both men are revered figures in Korean martial arts circles, and this film is the perfect platform upon which they can display their talents. Funny, stylish and with knowing references to western cinema (including an Asian Clint Eastwood) as well as blistering fight sequences, it has to genuinely rank. **Five Stars**

**Anticipation:** An obscure city of violence? Boring it all. **Four**

**Enjoyment:** The break-dancing fighters are brilliant. **Three**

**In retrospect:** Another great piece of Korean cinema. **Three**



# THE NIGHT OF THE SUNFLOWERS

WORLD PREMIERE  
at the London Film Festival  
Directed by  
Jorge Sanjaud  
Cast: Manuel Manóvil,  
Judith Doldoré, Jorge Sanjaud

1974

## A killer sprints

through a field of sunflowers in darkness, leaving behind the body of a young woman. It's an opening that helps explain the poetic title, but not much else about this tricky Spanish thriller that subverts the serial killer flick for a more involved, but no less violent, tale of murder.

Told from the perspective of six characters, it begins with travelling salesmen Miguel (Manuel Manóvil), who seems decent enough until he attempts to rape the beautiful Gela (Judith Doldoré) in a deserted wood. As Miguel flees the scene – and the movie – we fit back to Gela's other half Esteban (Camilo Gómez), a geologist arriving in town to

survey a newly discovered cave from which he later emerges to find first the injured Gela, then her attacker.

Except it's not her attacker; it's Cecilio (Cesario Estebaroz), one of two wronged old residents living in an otherwise abandoned hamlet. Mistakenly roughed up by the famous Esteban and his colleague Pedro, Cecilio's spiteful reaction triggers a chain of events that ends in another murder.

Nipping up the mess is local cop Tomás (Vicente Romero), for whom this chase is an opportunity to escape his dull life. Then there's supercilious neighbour Anís (Walter Vidarte), who's convinced his curse killed Cecilio, as well as Tomás'

father-in-law and boss Anselmo (Cecilio Bugallo).

Like so many contemporary Spanish films, *Sunflowers* thus rejects individual heroes in favour of a disparate ensemble. With the best, unarticulated memory of civil war period, it's a plea for understanding, a theme teased out by a structure that repeatedly requires you to re-enter the story at different points.

Ambitious and wide-ranging, its many ideas – miscommunication, loneliness, devastated lives, the value of justice, the death of rural life – may not all be nurtured equally, but they're assembled with assurance by director Jorge Sanjaud-Cabazudo, and even the loose end's provokes.

Most notable is the case of murderer Miguel, whose early disappearance leaves the threat of violence hovering, despite closure elsewhere. As the film finally catches up with him at its close, settling into a cheer, you can't help but squirm a little in your seat. **Rob Farnes**

**Anticipation:** Euro thriller, unknown director, offy title. **Two**

**Enjoyment:** A slick, smart, suspenseful ensemble. **Four**

**In Retrospect:** Slaps sleepily long in the wind. **Four**



## An interview with Julien Temple, director of *Joe Strummer: The Future Is Unwritten*.

**LW:** You've made films on Fleetwood and the Sex Pistols, so a documentary on Joe Strummer seems like a natural progression.

**Temple:** I was part of that punk era so I've made a couple of films about that time. Joe was also a friend of mine, so it's really an honour to him a document if you will.

**LW:** How did you meet him?

**Temple:** I saw him perform with The Clash in 1976. I shot that black-and-white footage you saw near the beginning of the film. I didn't see him for a long time after that because I went to work with the Sex Pistols. Then my wife told me that her best friend from school was coming to stay down in Somerset: she walked through the front garden with Joe Strummer on her arm. At the time I was trying to make a bit of an alliance with my kids and I wasn't doing a very good job. So he said, 'Come, join up with us'. He got us flying at them. He told me he wanted to live down here and I didn't think he was for real, but he did end up buying the farm down the road from where I am.

**LW:** Were you filming lots of bands in those early days?

**Temple:** Just The Clash and the Sex Pistols. I hated most punk music! It all sounded like a fucking racket to me except the bands that had something to say.

**LW:** There's lots of animation in the film. Why is that?

**Temple:** One thing about Joe was that, basically, he kept playing bags full of devotion and notes and lyrics. I've never known someone so based on such stuff, and it's moving even more moving by the fact that he was always moving around, living in regret – a real mood. He was an out-there, he had a very visual sense, so I just wanted to use some of those drawings and help tell the story when we didn't have any archive footage. I just showed that side of his creativity and his way of seeing his world.

**LW:** There are also a lot of references to the work of Orwell.

**Temple:** I think Joe's main message in many ways was the freedom of the individual and freedom of speech, which is a punk message. It's the distrust of the 'big brotherism' of the world we live in – he based that with a protest. There are references all through his life to Orwell. He read the books when he was at school, the front cover of The Clash's 'English Civil War' single was a small image from the Animal Farm cartoon. It was ironic that his first band was called the Gilman, because that wasn't actually a reference to room 101. David Jensen.

Check out the full transcript online: [www.thefilmhell.com](http://www.thefilmhell.com)



## JOE STRUMMER: THE FUTURE IS UNWRITTEN

by David Jensen

and Julien Temple  
with  
Joe Strummer  
and  
The Clash

**Julien Temple** has done it again: just short of five years after Joe Strummer's surprise heart attack in December 2002, that veritable ruler of the British rock doc has paid fitting tribute to a front man whose legendary festival campfire made sitting in a field cool again.

For fans of The Clash's music, this splendid film contains reams of great live footage, covering the jagged punk of their early days as well as later dalliances with ska, reggae and dub. However, it's the forgotten photographs of Strummer's school days and the bourgeois bohemia of his West London square that reveal a hidden side.

Also of note are the snippets from Strummer's old BBC World Service sessions, and the obligatory selection of talking heads who offer entertaining insider anecdotes. While we're never told exactly who is speaking, those with a keen eye will spot the likes of John Cusack, Johnny Depp and Bono, while lesser-known Londoners are entrusted

with the job of offering an altogether more honest appraisal.

Indeed, 70s screamer Don Letts (Joe's ex-lover) and old 101ers (Strummer's first pre-punk band) to detail the darker side of their late cohort. And quite right too: on more than one occasion, Strummer does come off like a bit of a prick – albeit a prick with a social conscience.

By spreading Strummer's punk politics to a new generation, this film should leave all who view it both enthused and enraged. 'The future is unwritten', the title says, offering a glimmer of hope. Grab some war paint before it's too late. Georgia Hobbs

**Anticipation:** A doc on Strummer may come down from a no-go. Too.

**Regiment:** Kenneth, appraisal of a charming husband. Time.

**In Retrospect:** Not too sentimental and a super soundtrack. Four.



## UNKNOWN

THEATRICAL RELEASE  
11/11/11

PG-13

Five men wake up in an abandoned factory with no memory of who they are or how they got there. Some are kidnappers and some are victims, but who's who? This is an enthralling mash-up of *The Usual Suspects*, *Cabin in the Woods*, and it raises what made these films so good: they made you think. The actors do the best they can with cardboard characters, but it's hard to suspend any disbelief in the face of hackneyed dialogue. There is some promise shown in Brent's directorial debut, but *Unknown* is flat and forgettable. **A-uric B+ave**

## THE NAMESAKE

THEATRICAL RELEASE  
11/11/11

PG-13

Ah, the epic lifetime-spanning biographical flick. There will be generational narrative jumps. A happy/turbulent childhood, enlightening/confusing adolescence and existential mid-life turning point on this minnow journey called 'life'. Also, there is the potential for teeth-pulling tedium, and that, unfortunately, is *The Namesake*. An Indian couple struggle to settle in America. There are a series of painfully disconnected time shifts. Eventually, one vicious lifetime of repetitive trope slouches across the screen. **Andrew Gubman**



## THE HILLS HAVE EYES 2

THEATRICAL RELEASE  
11/11/11

PG-13

A savage indictment of US military selection standards, *The Hills Have Eyes 2* sees eight idiots do their very best to get murdered by the homicidal mutants who live beneath the Fltalar Hills. The fun in this sort of film is not guessing what's going to happen (greasepaint deaths, presumably) but how and when it'll all go down. In this case *The Hills Have Eyes 2* doesn't fulfil its potential. Just how many different ways are there to chop someone to pieces with an axe? Not as many as you'll think, it turns out. **Jonathan Williams**

## BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA

THEATRICAL RELEASE  
11/11/11

PG-13

Two children – the archetypal loner boy and the new girl who doesn't fit in – journey to a magical land populated by strange creatures where they rule as royalty. Pushing the envelope? Hardly: this is fairytale paint-by-numbers. It's all too easy to deinde innocent entertainment and family fun through a pedantic analysis of angle, scene, script and score. Instead, we'll simply point out that this is the most one-dimensional, farcical daydream we've ever had to endure. **Adrian P. Jones**



## MY BEST FRIEND

When his business partner accuses him of having no notes, François (Daniel Auteuil) accepts a wager to produce his best friend within 10 days. Unfortunately, François is a self-centered misanthrope – but could help him close by in the form of a chirpy cab driver? The answer, predictably, is yes. While Leconte's film teays with the darker side of social isolation, this largely remains a gentle yet forgettable comedy like a rom-com without the rom. **B-2.** *Known points for the original concept. [Read Kelly](#)*

## THE ALL TOGETHER

Ex-TV producer and writer Gavin Claxton takes a leap of imagination with his feature debut, *The All Together*, a film about a TV producer who also writes screenplays. Chris Ashworth (Martin Freeman) returns home to find his deranged housewife, a group of estate agents and two Jehovah's witnesses being held hostage by an American stalkers. But the self-referential antics get old very quickly, and a myriad of cheap sitcom set-ups eventually swallow up the whole film. *Jonathan Williams*

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## MEET THE ROBINSONS

Super-impressive CGI is the main attraction in Disney's latest: a hyperactive story about a time-traveling orphan who wants to build a machine to help him remember his mother's face. The action unfolds at a bewildering pace that makes it hard to keep track of what's going on – a problem aggravated by the presence of over 20 characters, few of whom are particularly memorable. All the same, the graphics are really quite strazy and the plot finally redeems itself with a couple of neat twists. *Read Kelly*

## THE MESSENGERS

The Messengers revives that age old horror quarry: do you root for the hero because they represent all that's good and holy in the world, or do they deserve it because they're too stupid for words? Lane gunmen wandering your fields? Offer him a home! Is that a ghost? Follow it into a disused barn and find out! With a pre-title sequence designed solely to scare the crap outta you, this is no psychological thriller. But if you're dumb enough to find it scary, you probably deserve it anyway. *Alan Cate*

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The all-inclusive version of *Meet the Robinsons* is a bit of a letdown, but it's a fun film. The all-inclusive version of *Meet the Robinsons* is a bit of a letdown, but it's a fun film.

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THE BACK  
SECTION

IN WHICH WE DISCUSS  
THE MEDIUM  
OF FILM IN  
ITS MANY  
MESMERISING FORMS



St. Werburgh's & St. Columba's  
1987

THE HEADMASTER

A. R. D. DINE, M.A

In this our esteemed British issue,  
we bring to you a rundown of this  
country's key players in the world  
of short film.

Edited with the aggression of a  
playground bully by David Jenkins  
and designed with the fear of his  
victim by Rob Longworth

Yours sincerely,

# KEEPING IT REEL. WE HEART ANDREW BUJALSKI.

Like an express train at a small suburban railway station, the most distinctive director currently working in the US whooshes by at a rate of knots, unmoored by all and sundry.

As films like *Little Miss Sunshine* cement a robust notion of independent cinema from a stylistic trope coined by films and books to a modern-day-budget indie staple, Andrew Bujalski undercuts deftly through the mire of cine dévotion to carry the torch for an American tradition that has nearly gone better days. He is a truly independent filmmaker.

Bujalski has written and directed two films to date: 2007's *Funny Ha Ha* and 2009's *Mutual Appreciation*, which are both in the process of securing cinematic distribution in the UK. While both are undeniably low-key in terms of style and subject (the mercenary parody of post-collegiate life), they mark the start of a bit as much as a process to be aware of, as someone likely to have film success and DVD box sets dedicated to him as he set to distant future. In short, Andrew Bujalski is the real deal.

Bearing an uncanny physical resemblance to Milla Jovovich from *The Boys*, Bujalski cashes in on himself as the lovable and who is forced to make through acts of emotional pain. It comes so no surprise that he is something of a film buff too. "It was as a little kid that I first became obsessed with all kinds of movies. Things like *Raidy II* and *Star Trek II*. A lot of speech. That was what was out there. When I got to college, I started to see more of the successful independent stuff."

Paying the rent as a high school teacher and then a bookstore clerk, Bujalski's formal training included studying film at Harvard University on a course known for its specific focus on documentary. "Learning about documentary helped in the way I have gone on to approach movies. To look at some ways, the biggest lesson I ever learned about any kind of filmmaking is that it's always a bit harder than you think a guy with money an opposite a business of what you think a film is supposed to be like."

Perhaps as a legacy of this training, both films present Bujalski's natural ability to write dialogue that appears spontaneous. But does this mean that the look of the films play some of fiddle in system? "On one hand I want the film to look and sound good, and to look and sound good in a specific way as they are probably more composed than people realize," he offers. "I guess the values and priorities that are in place are not about a pristine usage of all sorts. It is about a compelling performance of all sorts."

With a penchant for non-professional casts, strong performances need be something of a big ask. "My method has always been based on support more than intense craft

When we'll see on there's always a sense that we're going back and forth between saying on schedule and just going off a little bit. Hopefully some of that is up on the screen."

Part of the joy of Bujalski's films comes from the simple understanding that advances in video technology and more access to high-end camera equipment does not allow for complacency when it comes to getting the performance right. "It's hard because people tend to talk about technical stuff and emotional or performance stuff as isolated from each other, and I don't think that's the case. I feel that a really interesting performance is always cranked up a really clever lighting scheme. You know, I've heard film makers say, "Look, the shoot went really well, we pulled it off. The actors weren't so great but everything else was great." That always drives me crazy as they were basically saying that everything was great except for the only thing that matters. I had this desire to take the opposite approach and make the performance the only thing that matters."

Bujalski's career is rooted in independent cinema but had to write a scholarly (albeit extremely funny) essay for American magazine *Not* in which he expounds on the artistic and financial ramifications of making more independent cinema. There's one analogy he uses concerning childhood favorite *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan* and how Captain Kirk lost a machine programed a secret to be lost by programming it. It is that, again, he's had to do to get film made? "There is a system out there, and if you want to make it in the independent world, there are a lot of things you're supposed to pay. The general thing there days is you're supposed to go out and see work and get your way in some kind of movie star who has the power to get the thing made. So we speak I'm hoping to shoot another film in the summer. It's as a student and independent vein to the others. Again, it like a non-professional cast, smaller crew, minimal equipment. Another one 'for me' you could say."

There is a strand for some of the more highbrow indie directors in work within the system in order to fulfill some of their more out there projects, most notably to even aoberberg and Gus van Sant. Would Bujalski ever consider going to the dark side of it as a means that making smaller films a more subject choice in his heart would become a little more? "There are plenty of film makers who started out very interesting, then found their way into the studio system, and a never make anything good again. That's probably my ultimate fear. If I had to keep making films any way as I've enjoyed it and haven't burnt out yet. To who says I need to keep making films at all? Maybe I should go work for some non-profit organization and do something good for the world?" But he does already, right? He laughs. There's a lingering, almost awkward silence then the conversation ends. David Jenkins

*Funny Ha Ha* is available on DVD on April 16  
For further info please see [www.differencebetween.com](http://www.differencebetween.com)



# DOIN' IT FOR THE SHORTIES



## BRITISH SHORT FILM: THE MOVERS AND SHAKERS

WORDS BY JAMES BRAMBLE. (AGED 8)

In this once-in-a-lifetime special, *EBL*er interviews 50 people responsible for making the British short film scene the most vibrant and revolutionary artistic culture in the known universe. From an old VW van with a projector to 'digital nannysmism', every person featured herein is breaking down boundaries to make short film accessible, exciting, artistically credible and economically viable. The variety of roles they play indicates the diversity of form, media and audience that shorts embrace, and the opportunities that abound for anyone with a camera. If anything unites them, it's the plea for quality content - so get filming!

# ED KING.

FILM CHANNEL PRODUCER,  
MYSPEACE

While YouTube has recently announced that it will be allowing contributors to "post a quote in the advertising experience in a mutually beneficial way", potentially offering viewers the world over an unexpected source of revenue, MySpace have signed the sale for short film directors by launching 'My Movie Made It!', which offers a whopping \$1 million funding for the best short (to be made into a feature). In collaborating with Vertigo Productions, FilmFest, Shooting People and Future Shorts, MySpace signals that this is no mere publicity drive but a serious investment in the industry. Ed King, Producer of MySpace's Film Channel, is currently in the process of establishing a jury panel of high profile industry members to whittle down the entries. The deadline for submissions is April 12.

"MySpace is a natural place for short film to live. It's something that facilitates exposure and connection. It's especially good for short filmmakers who are using their film as a calling card. If you put your film up on MySpace you don't have to pay any of the hosting costs, and massive amounts of people are going to watch it - more than you'll ever get if you take it to every film festival in the world to packed audiences. It's like a business card with your film embedded in it."



ABSENT  
WITHOUT  
NOTICE.

# PHIL ILSON.

CO-DIRECTOR, HALLOWEEN  
SHORT FILM FESTIVAL

Phil Ilson co-founded the Halloween Society Short Film Club in April 1994. It pioneered the presentation of short films among a programme of music, comedy and culture. Since then he has established himself as an organiser of multimedia events, and in 2002 co-founded the Halloween Short Film Festival. Following his programming of the shorts section at the London Film Festival, he passed on eight-point guide to what shorts should be like, for Time Out magazine. It resonated the reform of (mostly) every formal programmer: "Films must not open with an alarm clock going off."

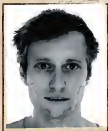
"I certainly don't think that as a country we can complain that there aren't many short films, there are more and more people doing it, but a message that there's a lot more bad stuff. You can tell if the film's been made as more of a calling card, and you know a lot of film school stuff cannot eat like that - very glossy. It doesn't really move me very much, and as someone who enjoys watching films I want to be moved."

# BEN BLAINE

## FILM PROGRAMMER, SHOOTING PEOPLE

When not making films with brother Chris about men whose job it is to watch pandas, Ben Blaine selects films for inclusion in *Shooting People's* screenings and their *Mobile Cinema* tour – described as, “three guys, a printer, a screen, a mobile phone and a van”. The cinema screens whatever it can, including people's living rooms. *Shooting People* provides an invaluable network for independent film-makers to discuss film, share advice, and find out and create. They also publish *Best of the Best* DVD, a compilation of the year's best films.

“There's all sorts of ways of getting into the film industry, and unfortunately a great many of them involve knowing the right people. When Ben has been a war zone around that, making an incredible amount of those films is currently much better than going to film school, but then at the end of three or four years you still don't know anybody. I think it's difficult to overstate the importance of *Shooting People* on the British film scene. What they're doing is to radically change the ways in which you can get into the UK film industry because it's possible to build a community and get your films seen. Short films are still screened at festivals, and it's very difficult to build an audience out of independent and other film-makers.”



# MATTHIEU DE BRACONIER.

## CINÉMA EXTREME

Philosophy graduate Matthieu de Braconier has worked his way through the roles of PA, producer, writer and coordinator. He currently manages 'Cinéma Extreme', a short film scheme funded since 2002 by the UK Film Council's New Cinema Fund and Film Four Lab. The aim is to “encourage and develop film-makers who do not adhere to commercial rules and cinematic ‘law’”. Key to Cinéma Extreme's approach is that they offer a full development process from script to screen, which offers the director the opportunity to learn about every stage of the film-making process.

“Cinéma Extreme has a very specific role within the industry to spot talent. There's the whole commissioning side – four films this year with a maximum of £50,000 – then development, which is about the commissioners developing relationships with the film-makers. Then there's raising, through development and helping film-makers to find their voices, more with their DfE or working with actors. Definitely a short film is not going to generate revenue. I think sometimes people start with the fiction of making, calling cards, but they're like bubble gum and then they're gone. In three years, too long, much too long and very much too long. It's important to keep a tight.”

# FABIEN RIGGAL

## FOUNDER AND FRONTMAN, FUTURE SHORTS

The more adventuresome and exciting of short film exhibitors, Future Shorts events have achieved the feat of breaking through the glib cliché of short films to become cultural events while not detracting from the films themselves. It was built from scratch by Fabien Riggall, and he is partly responsible of what he says is their pre-eminent success. Fabien began his own career as a manager, progressing to assistant director and then making his own films, his first Future shorts was sold to Film Four. Frustrated with the seeming dead end of short film production where, following the festival circuit, there had no place to go, he founded Future Shorts.

"We are the largest champions of short film. We put on 10 events a month around the world, we try and show short films in loads of different venues. The idea of Future Shorts is to develop a long-term interest, a long-term audience for short film. Future Shorts is a worldwide short film festival, a DVD label, a consultancy firm and a short film sales agency. Everywhere you go now there are screens popping up, in bars, pubs, clubs, trains, railway stations, your phone, your iPod. People want to consume stimulating culture quickly, and I think shorts lend themselves to that, people can dip in and out. The big key now is to redefine the medium in the big boys, to get people to see the value in it."



# MATTHEW JONES

## CREATIVE MANAGER, BITESIZE CINEMA

Each time Cinema brings together the best award-winning short films from all over the world into a quarterly selection. There are then packaged into feature length programmes and distributed around the UK to independent cinemas with digital projectors. Programmes are deliberately no longer than an average feature.

"I really wanted to go into film and had four friends who I came back to London from university with, and 'can we write all a bit gritty we said, 'Let's set up our own film event'. We convinced it as a one-night thing in a bar in Soho, but we started getting more loads of films, then the manager of the Curzon Soho heard of us and said, 'Why don't you do that here?' We used to do monthly screenings, and what we found is that you had one good film in every selection but the other disappointing films were a bit worse. We wanted to start that and keep concentrating on quality as four times a year you've got a new selection. We thought that worked out better because our selection focused on the award winners. We weren't overdoing, which is often what happens at festivals that have 100+ odd films."

# DAWN SHARPLESS.

**CREATIVE DIRECTOR,  
DAZZLE FILMS**

Dazzle Films profiles itself as a serious and committed short film label vigorously pursuing sales. Its founder, Dawn Sharpless, originally worked for the Short Film Bureau®, one of the biggest agencies in Europe. When it folded, Sharpless continued representing the filmmakers she had established a relationship with, and four years on has expanded Dazzle into one of the most important short film labels on existence.

"It's getting harder and harder to sell short films, but we sell to TV, Internet, DVD, theatrically where possible, mostly outside of the UK because in the UK there's not a lot of solid short film sales any more. Obviously we're working with mobile phones. Some people say they're not really solid sales, nobody wants to pay for content, they want to do free content. Nobody's got enough content for the mobiles. I've got lots of beautiful content that would be amazing for mobiles, but that's not what they want. They want short, snappy sketches - these come in lots, boys really. They want 30 films a week. My filmmakers send me some 50 minute film that won a big award, but I'm like, 'Great, can you make me a two-minute sketch, please?' That's the one I'll be able to do on a week."



## SIMON YOUNG

**HEAD OF ACQUISITIONS,  
SHORTS INTERNATIONAL**

Shorts International is a short film agency selling to over 100 international broadcasters, and providing tailored programming to companies as television, broadband Internet, airlines, home video and mobile phones. It manages the world's largest and most diverse film catalogue devoted to short films, consisting of over 1000 films, and is constantly acquiring new films each year. The company says that 40 per cent of the catalogue includes major film stars, recognizable talent, award-winning films, but encourages anyone to submit a film.

"Shorts International is a specialized short film distributor which is striving to create a market value for short films. We succeeded in getting short films other than the big studio content into a new market (in the UK) including the Short Film Oscar winners and nominees for the last two years, and in the UK we are selling short films as a video deal through BT Vision. We believe strongly in the potential of short films as entertainment and are striving to get short film distribution and exposure, allowing them to be seen outside the 'short film' world, and also being an easy one stop for the filmmaker to submit. Shorts TV France, a dedicated short film cable TV channel, has just launched - hopefully it will be part of the first channel of money around the world."

# SHANE WALTER:

**DIRECTOR, ONEDOTZERO**

Shane Walter embarked onedotzero as co-director in 1997, and has directed the organisation since 2005. He founded onedotzero industries in 2005, for which he acts as creative director, drawing on his diverse background and experience as a producer and director across a range of media. The annual onedotzero festival is the biggest digital film festival of its kind in the world, and the international tour takes it to over 60 cities annually. Onedotzero has become its own multi-studio enterprise, producing, commissioning, editing, distributing and distributing, and has an established DVD label.

"I think we were the first organisation to recognise a whole new wave of filmmaking talent from non-traditional areas. We worked with and highlighted talent and ideas coming from creative writing in film festivals, graphic design, music videos and club culture. The festival was pivotal in developing a digital dialogue between disciplines, looking at technology and convergence over 10 years ago, but also creative convergence in areas like computer gaming, architecture, fashion, design and fusing them into a new form of moving image. The audience and artists that were developed and nurtured have now influenced the digital cultural landscape. Like short stories versus novels, you can already be a lot more inventive, challenge freedom and conscience and try radical new ideas that you would never get to try in features. It is vital lifeblood for new talent and new ideas, and in some ways a true twenty-first century art form: 'analogous' to the future."



## ABSENT WITHOUT NOTICE.

## MARK COSGROVE.

**HEAD OF PROGRAMME,  
WATERSHED / PROGRAMMER,  
BRIEF ENCOUNTERS**

The first Brief Encounters festival of their film took place in 1995 as a 'one-off' part of the international celebrations marking the centenary of cinema. It proved so successful it has become a key event in the country's film festival calendar. Held annually at Bournemouth Arts Centre, last year it merged with its sister animation festival, Animation Bournemouth, under the banner, 'Encounters'. Cosgrove and Encounters are also active in promoting initiatives such as the Digital Competition for 10-15 second film, which will open to entries shortly.

"What I aim to do is showcase the best work from the UK and around the world. I travel to international film festivals to see work and view submissions. I see the short programmes as offering a platform for quality work, in a way showing people what is possible to make in short film. We don't look for about short film, which is often seen as inferior to feature filmmaking. But this is where people start out, where talent can be discovered. We are excited as an entire level in the industry, a showcase of new talent, a place for new filmmakers to meet the industry. The festival is going from strength to strength. It's just merged with Animation Bournemouth, and that makes it a fantastic combination of shorts and animation."

# JUST FOR LAUGHS ROTTERDAM 2007



As film festivals go, Rotterdam is one of the few that also refreshingly call itself 'international'. Despite taking place in a bag of canaries, mayonnaise and liberal social policies, the IFFR is refreshingly free from national stereotypes. The festival's organizers claim it is "devoted to actively supporting independent filmmaking from around the globe," and this year's programme certainly lived up to that billing. Countries as disparate as Colombia, Timor, Armenia, Palestine, Macedonia, Chile, Lithuania and the Philippines contributed films to the festival, many of which were nurtured by Rotterdam's pioneering (Bakht) Film Fund for filmmakers from developing countries.

This year's highlights included a Serbian production of *Blatni rat* as an anti-SEI tale, a shocking short drama about the fictional assassination of the current Danish prime minister, and a host of other colossal treats – most of which began the age-old question 'Why are foreign films so depressing?' Good, but depressing. Here are some more to inspire shock, awe and a Chiodo 4 light entertainment show entitled *Don't Forget Your Penis*.

**WENWU TYO (A MAN'S JOB)**  
**DIR. ALEKSI SALMENPERA, FINLAND**  
Has as the hero of film *Leakmanen*'s stylish Depression-fest *Prince Leoni* comes another bleak Finnish production. This time, the poor and weak a losing battle in life's lottery is John, a newly rehoming laborer who takes up prostitution in order to keep his family in working machines and

estate cars. Central performances from Tarmo Korpela and Jari Vahonen are as powerful as anything you'll see this year, so *Leakmanen* reveals the decidedly ugly human underbelly of the program's trade.

**GRACELAND**  
**DIR. ANOCHA SUWICHAKORNPONG, THAILAND**

As the bishop and to the world's most, laugh isn't impossible. The accomplishment there was the first Thai film to be screened as part of the 'Dances of the World' programme, and gained further plaudits in Rotterdam. Who'd have thought that an Elton impersonator, a disconsolate BMW driver and the double murders of Bangkok could combine to create such a haunting and poetic piece of film?

**SOLI LIP (DOES IT HURT?)**  
**DIR. ANETA LESNIKOVSKA, MACEDONIA/ NETHERLANDS/UMMI KOSOV**

Proving that all you need to make a film is a good idea and a camera, *Soli Lip* is a first-time director's debut in a triumph of resourcefulness and artistically inspired deconstruction. Then, the first Dogme film to escape from the Balkans, follows a group of four poor filmmakers in Skopje as they bear their souls to a local doctor in the hope of raising funds for a full-length feature. By the time the cast catch on to their director's duplicity, the seemingly honest footage she has shot as a screen test has already been edited into a film which ironically depicts the lives of her so-called friends.

*And first*

# STERLIN' BERLIN BERLIN FESTIVAL REPORT



Trends usually seen as 'difficult', with a party and audience homicide common social Hollywood fodder, the *Rehearsal* has hence been treated by jaded Hollywood execs as little more than a pre-Dancer loose cannon.

In recent years, however, Berlin and Los Angeles have made something of a pair. In return for providing glamour (this year including Robert De Niro, Sharon Stone, Clint Eastwood and Matt Damon), Berlin will bestow some Testosterone Indes, and in the form of the burgeoning European Film Market, facilitate some serious business.

Here, *Life* has reviewed a random selection of the films on offer at this year's *Rehearsal*, as all these endless beauty

## ARMY DIR. DONJEN SVILJIC, CROATIA

This subtle film by a Croatian director on a Bosnian father-son relationship is about dignity, desperation and cultural distance (even and contrary: East and West) fatherhood too. While the film dips into the exploitation of the civil war by Glimmer, it's no a tribute to the war-torn relationship as its core.

## EYE IN THE SKY DIR. NAI-HOI YAU, HONG KONG

Hong Kong returns to making money with this. In the city, it's the director thriller, the hard-hitting, fast-paced but being the mediocre version, and the fresh-faced rookie. The trope is that these are surveillance eyes, and it works.

## EAGLE VS SHARK DIR. TAJNA COHEN, NEW ZEALAND

*Eagle vs Shark*, with its fly-into-camera touch and self-conscious look, is indie film making at its most self-consciously indie. No surprise then that it was an Official Selection at Sundance. It's warm and funny, but why we can't see it as a *Napoleon Dynamite* for our own good.

## IN MEMORIA DI ME (IN MEMORY OF MYSELF) DIR. SAVERIO COSTANZO, ITALY

A two-hour film about tourist photo don'ts (don't like

a bag of laughs, and it isn't). Approximately a quarter of the film features a character hovering at someone's door. The rest is bleak exposition. It is, in its own way, extremely well done, funny, subtle, unusual and very classy (yep, huh). But it's probably preferable to just put on a beer then.

## WHEN A MAN FALLS IN THE FOREST DIR. RYAN ESLINGER, US

Dylan Baker plays another social misfit, Sharon Stone was her fading beauty, and Timothée Chalamet is a self-satisfied man trying to find a meaningful role in his even life. Well acted, scripted and shot, a pair feels like you've seen it all before.

## LES TÉMOINS (THE WITNESSES) DIR. ANDRÉ TÉCHINÉ, FRANCE

This French study about the appearance of AIDS in 1981 France manages to be moving, sensitive and amusing by expanding its theme beyond the tragedy of one young man's conviction of the disease, to a study of human relationships, love, jealousy, sexuality and age.

## TAMARA DIR. PETER KAHANE, GERMANY

Being a documentary about an 18th East German rock band called Jolly, it's suddenly Tamara will make it to the UK. The film centres on lead singer Tamara Danz, who died of breast cancer at age 41. Despite some *Grand Top* moments, it's both a touching portrayal of the band's relationship with one another, and an insight into youth culture and punk under the GDR.

## EAST IS EAST DIR. HENRY EDWARDS, UK

The *Rehearsal* also includes a range of rarely screened classics, each performed with a low-organ response. This year's programme has included an amazing 1916 film strongly about a working-class Irish Londoner who turns out to be the brother-in-law. Starring Florence Turner (the *Franchot* Girl) it's an amazing example of early cinema. The interest brought by Turner Films and the film is also evident that the star and studio systems have long been an essential part of film production.

James Berke





## THE MINING GENRE

There's lustiness in comradeship, camarade, heavy drinking and class war. There's love, there's sabotage, and there's a grocer having his kneecaps torn off by a gang of disgruntled miners. But for two hours and 45 minutes, Zola's novel is painstakingly re-created in every grain detail: a literal translation of words to collocated chat fish to carry over the literature's intensity, and squanders the opportunity to capture the spirit of the original in a new form. Bern could have done worse than look to John Huston — director of one of the greatest mining movies, and master of adaptation from the pulp classic to high literature.

Huston's *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre* is not just an entry on greed and human frailty, it's also a movie lesson course for Humphrey Bogart's flapped-out berserker act. It's not one you see that often, it's treated not to critical effect in *The African Queen* and naturally forms the backbone of strawberry-buzzed western thriller *The Gunfight*, but you'd have to go back to pre-*Codebusters* days to get anything like the pitchfork-eyed madman that defines his role here.

The profane story of this masterpiece — a trio of chancers team up to prospect for Mexican gold — is the catalyst for performances by Bogart, the director's father Walter Huston and Tim Holt that positively

dance amid the twinkling photography of John Hughes. When the gang gets lucky, Bogart's Fred C. Dobbs is transformed from a wily opportunist into a two-thong speed freak, wracked by fear of being gulped, inflicting the group with his insouciant paranoia as each man's grip on reality begins to loosen.

## MAKE MIN E A DOUBLE

### ACE IN THE HOLE (1951)

Great Betty Hutton stars in a prophetic attack on media hypocrisy based on a reporter's nefarious plot to produce a New Mexico mine rescue in order to shift himself up the greasy pole.

### MATEWAN (1987)

A better movie from the class struggle in '80s America which lays bare the mining company's capitalist nature. An uncomfortable on director John Sayles' previous social drama, *Brother from Another Planet*.

## JUST THE PITS

### KING SOLOMON'S MINES (1988)

The collapse in the end. The two white guys survive. Peter Hall was unavailable.



**HITCHCOCK: THE EARLY YEARS (1927 - 1932)**  
DIR. ALFRED HITCHCOCK  
AVAILABLE NOW

There's something odd about how the burgeoning of Alfred Hitchcock's cinematic art coincided with the crisis of sound. Half of the most dare-devil and beautifully remembered films from the late 1920s, beginning with student *The Ring* (1927), an experimental romance set in the world of shadow boxing. *The Manxman* (1929) is a not entirely convincing excursion into melodrama and another bizarre love triangle. *Champagne* (1928) is a sly piece of fluff humor aimed at French audiences, perhaps. And *The Farmer's Wife* (1931), an unconvincing search for love.

French director/humorist René Clément makes a great case for the themes in each - he's especially fascinated by Hitchcock's family circumstances - but you'd be hard pushed to pick out any key scenes with reference to his best known later work (the inclusion of an earlier film like *The Lady* (1930), might have helped but there are great little gems by himself, alongside his quick-making introduction).

The key film here is 1931's *Blackmail*, a superb thriller in which Hitchcock shows his immediate mastery of the new talking technology (he also uses silence to great effect). He taps up the conflict rhythm of the preceding films and continues to experiment with his visuals; there's an early gangster cameo - being attacked by a thief in a tube carriage - plus a remarkable chase after the blackmailer of the title to the British Museum, and the roof of the Reading Room.

The thriller's peculiar focus continues in courtroom drama *Murder* (1930), while another film based on a play, *The Skin Game* (1931), is the earliest of his real posturing on screen to someone that is well as surprisingly successful in what it was released. The collection's final *Richard Orange* (1931), a self-contained tale of a children couple's disastrous global travels. Finally, *Number 17* (1932) is a hilarious farce containing all the clichés of the thriller genre: stolen jewels, double-crossing thieves, confused identity, runaway trains, a trapped bus and - a forerunner of the director - trapped up in a house.

Crucially, of Hitchcock's pre-war work, this is the only one, all these films have great scenery and lush sets but it was with the coming of sound that he released thrillers were his thing and, just as importantly, discovered the pervasiveness - both morally and in terms of his best friends - that mark his particular genre.

**WALK ON, WALK OFF.**  
**THE 10 BEST HITCHCOCK GAMES**

**THE LODGER (1927)**

The director wasn't mature enough for his first British film, glimpsed at his desk in a newspaper, and later in the crowd walking in a street.

**LIPBOAT (1944)**

Hitch is featured in the 'before' and 'after' photos in a newspaper ad for slimming product 'Reduce Obesity Slender'.

**SPELLBOUND (1945)**

He comes out of a lift at the Rinko Hotel, smoking a cigarette and carrying a violin case - one of several appearances with a musical theme.

**ROPE (1948)**

Previously filmed in single takes with no cuts, Hitch is forced to hide behind a table - you get a glimpse of his protruding belly, but aspects of occasional paths of eyes make not greatly conspicuous.

**STRANGERS ON A TRAIN (1951)**

The director is once more weighed down with a musical moment - this time it's a double bass he's trying to manoeuvre onto a train in Furry Ganger gets off.

**REAR WINDOW (1954)**

Hitch is seen winding up a clock in the singer's flat approximately 10 minutes in.

**NORTH BY NORTHWEST (1959)**

He comes a bus in the opening sequence.

**PSYCHO (1960)**

When Janet Leigh returns to her office at the start, Hitchcock is standing outside the window, waving a monkey hat.

**THE BIRDS (1963)**

As Tippi Hedren enters David Bates's pet shop, Hitch comes out holding two white cats.

**TOPAZ (1968)**

Hitchcock is being pushed in a wheelchair on the airport when he stands up, shakes hands with a man, and walks off.



SHIRT DISCS PACKED WITH MOVIE GOODNESS

# DVDS



**THE JOHN SAYLES COLLECTION (1980 - 1984)\***  
**DIR: JOHN SAYLES**  
**AVAILABLE: APRIL 23**

*Return of the Secaucus 7* (1980) is a heartwarming comedy drama depicting the reunion of a group of college friends. With its loopy, charming narrative and focus on the everyday lives of unremarkable individuals, it's clear to see Sayles' influence as subsequent US screeners like Richard Linklater and Kevin Smith. However, a touch aged work. The characters are too indolent to be compelling, the story string not entirely with the meandering shooting style, and all too often an attempt at over-the-top humour fails. The viewing experience is something akin to watching a street Woody Allen film - there's talent there, but the response it's most likely to elicit is a half-hearted shrug of the shoulders.

Follow up, *Lone Star* (1981), and a little more on it, but rather let down by its conceits, which were probably closer to TV movie territory. Our tender protagonist is a wordy scandal in a small college town when she leaves her family for another woman. Sayles' handling of the subject matter is sensitive and even-handed in a post-apartheid era, but the odd anatomically incorrect lesbian scene annoys. But a nice, honest, sensitive/straight, and runs out of steam long before the end.

Plus all the bunch is *Brother From Another Planet* (1984), an oddball sci-fi piece set in a post-apocalyptic town, which our Sayles began to get a handle on the directing here. A more than with intelligent leading powers such lands in Harlem, New York, where he is presumed to be a black illegal immigrant. He gets a job fixing arcade machines, spends enough time in the hood to deserve that much work, and gets chased around town by his extraterrestrial enemies. Imagine Spike Lee remaking *Mirrors* on a shoestring budget, then upping it with scenes from a '70s *Fan From Outer Space*, and you'll have a rough idea of what to expect. For anyone familiar only with Sayles' earlier, realist character studies, this makes for fascinating viewing, and is the only reason to seriously consider purchasing the set. *James Bevel*.



**MULHOLLAND DRIVE: SPECIAL EDITION (2001)**  
**DIR: DAVID LYNCH**  
**AVAILABLE NOW**

A strong candidate for Lynch's finest two hours, *Mulholland Drive* is a headbuck-bowling potter in two distinct parts: the dreamland of Hollywood is seen through the eyes of a hopeful young actress (Naomi Watts), while the second crashes her aspirations like a lava in a trash compactor. The plot - or what can be gleaned of it - concerns Walter's struggle to help a beautiful woman (Gwyneth Paltrow) who sits at the center of a bizarre conspiracy. The two leads are screaming, while Lynch serves up a particularly lush array of surreal plots and a scorching climax. The ending of this new two-disc edition is a dizzy dreamlike action, although the chapter selection screen is annoyingly cryptic. *Wes Kelly*.

**TROIS HOMMES ET UN COUFFIN (1988)**  
**DIR. COLINE SERREAUX**  
**AVAILABLE NOW**

Yes, the title does seem sort of familiar. The American film *Three Men and a Cradle* was based on this French version, and Serreaux pointed back accordingly. Thus, the following should ring some bells: Catherine Mouchet (Michelle Bougonch), architect Pierre (Alain Guenot) and co-narrated Jacques (André Dussolier) are three friends enjoying life, their hairline pad and, of course, their fairly large share of women. One day, Jacques gets off to the Pier East, asking the others to look out for a package. Later help Marie, cruelly dumped on the pier's doorstep in her cradle. Can she be Jacques' "package"? Although Marie seems a wee, her unexpected presence brings out the French guy's generosity and, in the end, they're glad of it. The men aren't scintillating in the American, more aggressive and less attractive, and there aren't as many memorable quips as the US version. Still, all told, it's a first good film, just not as droll *Mélieux*!



**THE GRIFTERS (1990)**  
**DIR. STEPHEN FREARS**  
**AVAILABLE NOW**

In Stephen Frears' most rare adaptation of Jim Thompson's pulp novel, John Cusack, Annette Bening and Angkor Warren form a double talking trio of con artists at odd odds. As was guys go, they're past their best. Ray (Cusack) can't force 'em like he used to. But then someone beat him in 1988 with seven others (blowing the life span from bad to worse when his mother, Lily (Bening), appears after years of absence. Only 34 years his senior, she's a serious MILF. With ice-cream hair and blood red lips, she's powerful and happy to die for, she's all sex, sex and strategy. She wants Ray to go straight and to stop using his fancy girlfriend (Bening). But he wants her to go straight and stop being a "mom." But, since getting's objective and a tactic to be "happy," neither can walk away. With Bening as a no-nonsense game of cat and mouse which thoroughly transcends a variety of sexual go-rounds. Marking an ironic or ironic, the DVD offers new director and actor commentaries as well as teacher opportunity to delight in Thompson's family saga and as smoothly tragic drama. George Noble



**DERSU UZALA (1975)**  
**DIR. AKIRA KUROSAWA**  
**AVAILABLE NOW**

Based on the 1923 memoirs of explorer Vladimir Arsenov, Derisu Uzala is an account of the Russian's exploration of Siberia between 1917-27. Kurosawa's film, mixing photo-reports and fiction between Arsenov (Toshiyuki Nishida) and a local hunter named Urala (Mitsuo Miura). Always keeping a respectful distance from both characters, the camera focuses instead on the harsh beauty and desolation of Siberia's vastness. Sores - a striking combination of the beauty and the tragedy. The two explorers' shared journey is marked by great pain, as they struggle through the endless days. Derisu Uzala is a masterpiece of film, and a rare example of filmmaking that leaves you with a sense of awe.



**GYPHO (1988)**  
**DIR. JAN DUNN**  
**AVAILABLE NOW**

So, Gypo's the first French Dumas film, which should allow bold viewers to be all concerned about the beauty of "Gypso's" filmmaking. Dumas-style. Or, we could just acknowledge that, in the end, it goes the work a documentary film well used to the story of a homeless refugee entering the lives of a double working class family. Told from three points of view, it's nuanced, sincere and, in parts, well-acted (yes, that means you Freddie Melton and Paul McQueen). But, ultimately, all Gypo says is that refugees get a rough ride, there are many ways to say one story and that Margot makes - one of which comes to much of a surprise. Graham Ford



**EMMANUELLE: UNCUT (1974)**  
**DIR: JUST JACQUIN**  
**AVAILABLE: APRIL 23**

In the '70s you could get your intimate rocks off to such hardware fare as *Deep Throat* and *The Devil in Miss Jones* or while for soft-core drizzle like *Sebra* and *The Story of O*. Director Just Jacquin set the template for the numerous Emmanuelle series (not all of them, with the requisite number of 'n's) as 1976's wild original back-tasteful gemset, Sylvie Kristel. The formula remained the more throughout our post-'60s and would have played well through a series of early '80s and tastefully shielded male magazines before achieving *Emmanuelle* through gang rape. It's funny, no why shouldn't she be getting her ugly apron, back company? Pretty much about, but the film are uniformly tedious prilly quipping sentences, from philosophical guff apparently uttered because we're in the imperial East. The silver-dubbed dialogues on the worst of it—certainly no one can endure Pierre Bakel's soundtrack without developing a severe migraine, the obscure charm of a woman smoking a cigarette with her legs awkwardly sticking *Just Add*.



**THE 60's COLLECTION:**  
**THREE FILMS FROM JEAN-LUC GODARD (1962 - 1967)**  
**DIR: JEAN-LUC GODARD**  
**AVAILABLE NOW**

It's easy to forget how cool the bad man of the *Nuovo Roman* '60s work is for all his old man pessimism. *Force 10 in Paris* (1962) — the tale of a would-be scores' director and prostitution — is a absolutely nothing, not least when Giulio's performance must have known with Carol Dreyer's *Les Passions de Jeanne d'Arc* in *Marcello Mastroianni* (1964), the director never has less on political fervor and commitment apartly among the children of Marx and Camus. French youth may be against the US for once in Vietnam but is happy to embrace scolding American conservative devotion. Jean-Pierre L  aud in a winning lead and the allegorical, as of *Trafficienti Amore* (1966) (name checked here as not purely) has had a little education. *Prostitution* is again the theme in *Two or Three Things I Know About Her* (1967), which is one of the more subtle effort of — or perhaps metaphor for — *Prostitution* life. It's packed with primary colors and, as in all three films, there are wondrous moments when the scores look caught through you. These may not be Godard's most varied moments but they like with an exuberant energy and unquenchable intellectual curiosity. No name is such, but a great 46-page booklet included. *Just Add*.



**BE WITH ME (2006)**  
**DIR: ERIC KHOO**  
**AVAILABLE NOW**

Renowned Singapore director Eric Khoo's *Be With Me* is a slow film, it takes 10 minutes before a dramatic even speaks. However, if you can look the pace, it's also highly rewarding and more than capable of reducing viewers to quivering emotional wrecks, *Ikematsu* *Adaptation*-style. That's how good it is. Mostly, then it's thanks to Thér  se Chan, a 41-year-old *Blondie* woman who, though the only non-Asian in the film, radiates a unique energy. The result is an unusual, uncomfortable and unsurpassable work which is moving, inspirational and utterly inspired. *Adam Bellow*.



**KISSED (1996)**  
**DIR: LYNNE STOPKIEWICH**  
**AVAILABLE NOW**

As a child, Sandra (Molly Parker) performs elaborate rituals with dead animals, forming a passionate, obsessive relationship with death. As an adult she takes a job in a mortuary and begins making love to the corpse, a secret she shares only with Matt, a medical student who discovers it and is horrified by it. In the end, the relationship between the two is an intensely doomed one, the potentially unbearable desire to share with a solitary supporter of a puffy romance. Though Parker's understated and understated performance creates a poignant and sympathetic central character, Stopkiewicz takes little time to explore her confused motives. Ultimately *Kissed* runs on self-questioning than it does on Jack Black.

**639 WAYS TO KILL CASTRO (2006)**  
**DIR. COLLAN CANNELL**  
**AVAILABLE NOW**

Pepper, peas, exploding barbells and kazoos: the methods dreamed up to bump off Fidel Castro range from the silly to the downright surreal. Chronicling 63 years of assassination attempts by the CIA, mafia and Cuban exiles, this documentary has the right tone with a '70s music soundtrack and clips from a Cuban spy show full of mushy speeches, reports and panel talks. It delivers what the screen will too, including the bombing of Cuban Flight 455 in 1976. Director Cannell gets inside the magic into Castro's private life — who are most than happy to shed all both stresses and blood — and talks to pro Castro super-agent Pablo Escobar. Screen include an interview with Jimmy Carter and Cannell. *Steve Savary*



**RESSOURCES HUMAINES (HUMAN RESOURCES) (1998)**  
**DIR. LAUREN CANTET**  
**AVAILABLE NOW**

In this re-release of his first feature film, Laurent Cantet serves up a powerful dose of social realism, thus proving that French cinema has more to offer than monochrome pictures, tight scripts and women in nurse uniforms. Frank, a student leaving a striking resemblance to ex-Lesbian Yves-couch Mike Nesmith, craves from every way in Paris to become a true man manager in the governmental factory where his father works. With the newly proposed 15-hour work day, a wedge between the proletarians and their money-grubbing masters, he is soon forced to decide where his loyalties lie. The family rift, cultural uneasiness and a disappointing death of Guido turn in these months. Well worth a look, nonetheless. *Mike Stry*



**SWEET DREAMS (1985)**  
**DIR. KAREL REISZ**  
**AVAILABLE NOW**

You can't help feeling that this is getting a DVD as release due to a certain country singer's hope. But while *With The Love* featured Johnny Cash for a full good look, *Sweet Dreams* adds future country hero and Perry Clay's college story which just isn't true. Our director's film took criticism for depicting Clay's (Perry Long) relationship with husband Charlie Dick (Ed Harris) as violent, but today it's the man of *Sweet Dreams* movies which attempt to cover for too much back story that in a down it's a much better film in the second half, when it slows down to deal with Long and Harris' depiction of Clay's marriage. However inaccurate, it's compelling viewing and totally ideal for watching two hours on a Sunday with your mother. *Tom Gille*



**BIS ANS ENDE DER WELT**  
**(UNTIL THE END OF THE WORLD) (1991)**  
**DIR. WIM WENDERS**  
**AVAILABLE NOW**

Wim Wenders' re-released metaphysical road movie journey through dark cities and a sun-blasted wilderness. Christ (Sally Kershwood) leaps into a mysterious flight in a minor historical France, making a close meeting that pulls in more from Gene and a Chandler novel. The first half of the film is where it's a lackluster pursuit through a badly done film before ending up in Australia. Wenders' attempts for in his observation and out in his plot. In a crash, the film is a frustrating mix of close sequences devoid of any dramatic tension, often by wildly powerful imagery. The characters shuffle around member like for the first hour, and only come to life Down Under. The soundtrack, though, is superb. You could turn the dialogue off and put them to Nick Cave, Traffic, Can and R.E.M., as where landscapes open up to front of you. Definitely one for hardcore Wenders fans, if nobody else. *Steve Savary*





# VINCENT CASSEL

## PROFILE



**You probably know Vincent Cassel!** Perhaps you saw him setting the record straight in *La Haine* or taking vengeance with a few colleagues in *Intervista*. Maybe you recognize him from his English-speaking roles in *Armageddon* and *Gladiator*. You might remember his capricious aristocrat in the sequel to *Le Dîner de Cons*. You might also know he's married to Marion Cotillard, but we're here to talk about him.

Specifically, Cassel is in town to talk about *Shenon*, a loud, colorful and slightly surreal horror comedy from France. The film is the first feature from Newsworld, a collection of like-independent creators from the suburban estate of Paris. Cassel says his first meeting with Newsworld — the name comes from *Newsweek* — was when they were late in the business. Two years later, he's producing and starring in three New films.

Cassel embraces the multicultural filmmaking we're carrying on a tradition started by *Le Haine*, capturing a world far removed from the whistling drums of mainstream French cinema. "I say to people, if you don't get it, I totally understand, but your kids will love it," he says. "All the stuff in the movie, the clothing, the discussion about religion, the fact that slavery was in a way a lot, that's very close to reality for them."

In spite of its producer's enthusiasm, *Shenon* received decidedly mixed reviews in France. Cassel says he's used to this sort of reaction. "When we had the worst reviews ever," he says. "People said it was boring. But it was inspiring, and in the years after you had a bunch of guys trying to do the same thing. Whether you like *Shenon* or not, you can see it's special."

Cassel's career has been dedicated to the sort of independent cinema that will never find mainstream success, so it was surprising to see him take up alongside the Tarantino adaptation of *Quintet*. He says he wasn't selling out. "Godfather is not like *Jerry Bruckheimer*, you know? Even that film had its indie sensibility. They'd be shooting the target as we were making it, so it didn't feel like a big Hollywood film."

He's back on the indie festival scene, having just finished David Cronenberg's *Antony & Cleopatra*, a drama about the Roman underworld. Cassel says he loved working with the Canadian actor. "I know it sounds like a fate worse than the DVD, but it was such a pleasure; you know, but it's true. He's witty and precise and he gives you a lot of space in an actor."

You get the feeling Cassel's performances require a lot of space. From the lapidary *Le Haine* to the wildly dramatic *Joseph in Berlin*, he is an actor of burning intensity. "If you're making films for the kind of person who accepts the convention that they're watching an actor," he says, "then you have to go to that extra level to make them believe it. If I don't sleep a night, that's because I'm doing the right thing." *Shenon*.

*Shenon* (later) is out now in DVD



SCREEN ICONS:  
THE JULIE CHRISTIE COLLECTION (1963 - 1970)  
DIRS. JOHN SCHLESINGER, JOSEPH LOSEY  
AVAILABLE NOW

In the matter of British women legends, Julia Christie epitomises a sensible mix of pragmatic cool – a quality that owes much to the generally high standard of her black colleagues. This four-disc box set offers a welcome change to certain her catch words.

*Belshazzar* (1941) was the film that launched Chouteau's career — a New Wave tale of a meandering day-dreamer and his unfortunate girlfriend. Chouteau's likable turn as the long-suffering Lex was enough to damage her from her lovely co-star, and it's easy to see why this is still regarded as one of her best performances.

Deriving CINEMA from the success in the role of Donna Room, a female equivalent of Michael Crichton's *Jury*, a kinesiologist model, she is on her way through the movies and shadows of the 1920s, leaving a trail of broken men in her wake. The film's on-screen companion has been none of her, while Crichton himself has been on a performance that made an Oscar Room like Andrews in *The Brand of Silence*.

For *From The Muddy Ground* (1947) Ironic has aged quite badly, though it's certainly worth wading through the slow pace to reach Mr. Bore's own, much more modern day.

Wider appealing is *The Go-Boys* (1972) — the odd-one-out of the set, being the only film here to be directed by Joseph Losey, rather than John Schlesinger. The quirky premise — a pair of senile men's lives mistaken for their affair by using a 19-year-old boy as a carrier pigeon — is enlivened by a touch that breathes life and psychological depth into the characters. Contemporary cinematic drama has rarely so entertained. **Alan Bell**

## HORROR SOUNDLINE

[illegible]

As for the "monstrous brain" making suggestions for man's "darker" side, it's Karen Carpenter from *Her Mother's Daughter* (The Fox, 1984). A beautiful, funny singer-musician, it shows the artist, natural and slightly twisted, of the many accessible contemporary Karens. Kim from *Devil's Rock* as it were Kim (A Bit of The Future, 1984) and Chynna Marie Park (Old Guy, 1984). The moment is *daddy G&H*, but the struggle of an economic family overcoming the head brings a much-needed credibility back to the belated singer-musician.

Recent American horror, on the other hand, has been taking a rather less subtle approach to terror, treating not themes of *guilt* and *spite* (Gialli Gialli 1995) plays around with an *idea-to-plot* cast in a renewed attempt to put viewers' experiences. Rumour has a John McEwan's modified the idea of playing the last rule more sophisticated than the other. Good job, John.

[illegible]

**NEW MASTERS OF CINEMA 01 (2003 - 2004)**  
**DIRS. CHRISTIAN ANGELI, VANESSA LY, CELIA**  
**GALAN JULVE, MARIANELA MALDONADO, CATALIN**  
**MITULESCU, FÉLIX VISCARRET**  
**AVAILABLE: APRIL 2**

Short film anthologies seem to be doing just as strong at the moment, with a smorgasbord of new reflections rolling into town almost simultaneously. On the evidence of this thought-provoking labor compilation from the New Masters of Cinema label, there does seem to be no going back on the trend.

The age-focused films cover the full gamut of human existence, drawing viewers backwards through the trauma of a shared abusive childhood in Italy (*After Your Mother*, 2004) to a French-English man's haunting and virally winning narration of his father's past (*Adopting Father*, 2003).

In stark contrast, the greatly American *One Minute Past Midnight* (2004) is a heart warming to a way of seeing on the Siberian tundra. Set in 1938, the prohibition of tobacco has just begun and a few kids like the one abundant to be banned. This isn't much set in Russia and there, two nightbirds who spend the small hours discussing *Black Panther* and dreaming of conducting a meaningful conversation with a "day person."

*Breaking Out* (2004) is lighter on dialogue and heavier on poetic visuals, but don't let this put you off. Director Mariela Maldonado never lets us off our guard, indulging in a surrealism, offering a cerebral and replete insight into the darkness of depression.

Ironically (or not), Cannes Palma d'Or winner *Traffic* (2004) is the best entry of the collection, focusing largely on the plight of a gridlocked businessman and his much changed working world.

Perhaps the best of the bunch is *Conscience de Jeunesse* (*You're Young*, 2004), an explosion of irreverent irreverence which follows the lives of five young teens in and around an unassuming airport. As he plays over the wreckage of his emotions in a cinema rehearsal, hotel porter Leo suddenly seems up the inspired eccentricity of this short film reflection "For the first time I see a clearly. Movies are fucking great!" *Queer. After All.*

*New Masters of Cinema 01* is available to buy from  
[www.newmastersofcinema.com](http://www.newmastersofcinema.com)



**REQUEM (2006)**  
**DIR. HANS-CHRISTIAN SCHMID**  
**AVAILABLE NOW**

The best film of 2004 shatters into DFD where – back permitting – the message of depression will hopefully be diminished to a broader audience. Indeed, this story of a young German androgynous who is possessed by something is a horror film for people who don't like horror films, with Sandra Bullock's lead performance a masterpiece in emotional diversity. Reducing *Requiem* to a form of focusing on a metaphorical parable about death is hardly there in the impression that this is the film. Let's say that there would have produced if he was asked to make *The Heartbeat*. But it's so much more than that – it's a true-blue masterpiece. *David Jenkins*



**CASINO ROYALE (2006)**  
**DIR: MARTIN CAMPBELL**  
**AVAILABLE NOW**

Billed as an antidote to the over-the-top, over-the-top films of the previous era, Bond version 16 may have discovered his humanity, but he hasn't lost the things that make him a bona fide badass. While the plot revolves around his psychological battles — with both enemies and allies trying in vain to break down his armor — what's notable about and a trait of modern Bond girls are aware for aware. Less a woman than a re-emerging, Daniel Craig's 007 is a product of his brutal environment who, without forsaking his style, has finally discovered some substance. Not much, though. *Josh Riediker*



**BLACK BOOK (2006)**  
**DIR: PAUL VERHOEVEN**  
**AVAILABLE: APRIL 30**

World War II gets sexy in Paul Verhoeven's Dutch thriller about a notorious Jewish singer (Carice van Veen) and a Nazi officer (Benjamin Knol). Clearly the Holocaust from a Hollywood perspective, *Black Book* is history reimagined, and one in which some crimes have seemed little more than a misfortunate Zeeman from the genre than, because though she's a superhero whose secret weapon is sex appeal, the unforgivable Van Veen's charisma led way through two hours to make it all just gripping. *Gregg Kilday*



**PAN'S LABYRINTH (2006)**  
**DIR: GUILLERMO DEL TORO**  
**AVAILABLE NOW**

In the few instances of how dark and how magical war is, del Toro delivers one of the most exceptional films of the decade. Young Ofelia (Ivana Baquero) would like the grim world of the Spanish Civil War and an unsavory, yet exhilarating, fairytale ritual made a nearly labyrinth. Dropping the typical whiteness of the children's tale, del Toro lets a nearly child's-eye view explore the harsh realities of fascism, family, war and death in truly mesmerizing, grown-up style. *Jason Meyer*



**WASSUP ROCKERS (2006)**  
**DIR: LARRY CLARK**  
**AVAILABLE NOW**

Pan's Labyrinth, pan by the well doc, *Wassup Rockers* sees Peter Pan of the screen, Larry Clark, broadly show some other scenes of a put-upon gang of punk rock Losers withy head from gritty South Central in a small Beverly Hills. Over there, they weren't a rock act, but in the movie they were a rock act and ran smack bang into a good upstate film on photography. These dangerous lessons lead to fatal consequences, culminating in a worthy message about American (in)tolerance. But, with shots of teen beef bats taking proceedings over any real story, some, or indeed worse, it's unlikely that anyone over 15 will stay to hear it out. *Gregg Kilday*

Clark and the makers for a fairly are features on Larry Clark that upholds a quite ignores the film.

# FILM

EAT THE RICH (1987)

## DIRECTOR

PETER RICHARDSON

## STARRING

LANAH PELLAY  
NOSHER POWELL  
LEMMY

## BOX NOTABLES

MINT CONDITION

## TRAILERS

THE PICK-UP ARTIST  
THE ROY WHO COULD FLY  
NIGHTFLYERS  
REVENGE OF THE NERDS II  
MAXIMUM OVERDRIVE  
THE SQUEEZE

## NOTABLE QUOTE

DIE, MINGE-EATERS!

"We must admit that history is responsible to a large extent because it enables us to pass judgement on the past," exclaimed whipper-snapper former Home Secretary Douglas Haard. While many thought he was eloquently pointing out the need for a newly palmarized Britain, he was of course referring — often obliquely — to Sir Ross McEwan, in doing so, specifically attempting to distance his Cabinet from the now-famous misadventures of The Comic Strip's 1987 big-screen policy program, *Not The Rich*.

Loosely based on Alan Moore's graphic novel *V for Vendetta*, Richardson's ribald splatter follows Alex (Lanah Pellay), a redneck Glaxo Pufft nugget who finds from warlike yuppie society, "Eminence," for being too common, too gay and too black, and is then thrown in the mercy of the black, redneck punkband for one of *Adolf Thatcher's* Britain.

When an attempt to chain debt money degenerates/breaks into a bout of food plying, one innocent civilian enemy is mowed on the run, becoming dinner across the breadth of Middle England Creek, riding a chair home around Wiltshire with Big Ben from *Swindlers* while picking the ears of former Conservative Councillor, Ronald Allen said, of course, Lemmy from *Motörhead*.

Meanwhile, in an on-early science film, beer-swilling, sugar-swinging, rapidly smoking Home Sec. Noshor Powell a busy draft with Home Secretary's son, champagne (RA) secondhand Kid Mupfitt's finger puppet's crude assault with all the subtlety of an enraged gorilla. A verbal rickety punch on the diplomatic pulpit later and Nosh has his rights on on crashing Alex's flagrant Robin Hoodery. The board is set, the rules are smacking the rules and the game is on smoking.

Adorning something akin to a photo (sketches) taken by cross-processing Hagar's with class (true nightmarish Pure, the film is as comically satirical as a rednecked stockholder. *ET* is the visual equivalent of listening to long, warm radio with an air cream headache, and better a smoothie moulder than a Simulacra dehydrated.

Impassioned are clearly Gilliam's *Brazil*, Norman Tebbit's "On your side!" speech and northwestern's picked from a municipal golf course, but there of the Thatcher-baiting, can just Tontation of Tony Blair's son. Alex who — compared though he remains — have at least one way to show a cut, the film's cleverly painted political puppets falls better and faster than Del Boy in that same bar.

In short, the Strip had played in their three screen shops. The following year's TV series would, ironically, produce some of their best work as the British Revolution's legacy of *Mr. Jelly Goes Next Door*, *The Top's* pithy comic fury and *The Doke*, there are no disposable classic. It would be another four years before they finally received cinematic recognition, only to immediately re-offend with 1992's deeply deflating ensemble *The Boys from the Do*.

Nosher — the redneck!

EX-RENT HELL  
BY ADAM LEECHMAN



# SHORT STUFF: THE MAKING OF A SHORT FILM PART ONE.



When I came up with an idea for a short film 12 months ago, a normal sample enough: two characters, one room, an awkward situation and some finely tuned dialogue. The truth is, the longer you leave a story on a piece of paper, the further it drifts from reality. Try as I might to avoid this, I had to concede that there was only one way to realise my film: in exactly the way I imagined it. I had to make it.

When I first set out on this project, I hoped it was possible to produce a film without any money. Not even I was foolishly enough to believe it could be done without actors. Fortunately, my friend and ex-producer Steve's dubious put on an extra *effort* and opened a few doors. Before I could say 'Chloro's been a snap open', one of his acting contacts had drawn up an impressive sheet of names to read the script, and it only took a few days before the auditions could be booked to go ahead.

Scouting down a location proved to be pretty straightforward (thanks to The House on Blood for your atmospheric corridors and creepy room), and we were soon ready to put together a crew for the shoot. My cousin turned out to possess an encyclopaedic knowledge of gelatins and useful contacts throughout the lighting industry. Maxine came from another friend that we might be able to get post-production facilities for the price of a pun. A great Director of Photography liked the script enough to offer his services for nothing if we covered his expenses.

It was all going so well. Until it crossed my mind that people tend to like a wee bit of noise with their visuals. A budget of zero pounds doesn't generate a whole lot of points in the music industry, and artists' royalties don't come cheap. Luckily the son of a friend of a friend of Deep pulled in their *form*... I happen to be signed to Chemical Underground records. Not only is he a great composer, he's very good enough to accept large in kind of a PAVE clip, and generous enough to write an original score for our finished cut.

For the crew is almost there, we've got a location, the prospect of a stellar cast and a soundtrack hanging away in the back of a first class museum. All being well, we're due to shoot in a month.

What can possibly go wrong? *Mike Brett*

*Click back to next issue for another instalment of Mike's adventures in the world of filmmaking*

# THIS MONTH'S COBRAVISION WINNER. IN ASSOCIATION WITH ITV.

## *Judgment Day*

**DIRS: ASH PEARLS, RICHY LLOYD**

An incredible month for CobraVision brings you Ash Pearls and Richy Lloyd taking the top prize for *Judgment Day*, a shot which sees Lucifer battling it out with God, *Street Fighter* style.

The sound effects and graphics are spot on, while the array of weapons available to the representatives of heaven and hell shows both imagination and passion for the one-on-one combat panning to which *Judgment Day* is an homage. Unlike anything we've seen so far in a year of competition, Pearls and Lloyd are deserving winners.

Other strong contenders included Andy Gibson with quite her professionally produced effort *Animal Crusades*, and Stephen Levin with the disturbing but funny *Her Million Brides*, while *Red Rover* from Umberto & Carolyn boasted the best effects of the month.



**KING  
OF THE COBRA**

WINNER OF THE MONTH

## SMALL BUT PERFECTLY FORMATTED: WIN A PLAYSTATION 3

This year's CobraVision has come closed, but fear not – next year's competition is set to hit the ground running with a brand new format. Instead of creating 90 s five-second episodes, entries will consist of one 90-second film standing as its own

programme, shown in its current entirety before feature films on ITV4. To celebrate the format change, any film maker who gets their 90-second film in the new format to Cobra before April 15 will be in the running to win a Playstation 3.

SAUSAGE & MASH CAFE



CHAPTER SIX.

DON'T BELIEVE THE

HYPE.

INCOMING MOVIES

LAID BARE

## Untitled Rolling Stones Documentary.

By Martin Scorsese

WHAT IS CHAIKO, Goodfellas and The Departed all have an answer? No, apart from that. That's right. They all feature the wailing guitars, background sax-rooms and built-in-out chorus of Stones classic "Gimme Shelter." Someone is no stranger to the music documentary, whether he's editing out a rock of coke from Neil Young's upper lip in The Best Years, or making sure none of a razzing Dylan in No Direction Home, he undoubtedly makes sure pretty cool people look cool on video. The film promises original footage, no less than 100 A-list cinematographers, and a guest appearance from Bill Clinton. Meanwhile, rumors about that Rock 'n' Wacky are planning to write a script together. *Rolling Stone* June 2007

## Ocean's Thirteen.

By Steven Soderbergh

The second sequel to the all-star heist caper now boasts a release date and a trailer. After the disappointing Ocean's Twelve, Soderbergh and co return to Vegas in an attempt to recapture the sharp cool of the first film. The teaser seems to suggest that Andy Garcia's character is now in cahoots with Danny Glover's gang, though plot details are incredibly thin on the ground. Most of the gang will return, though Julia Roberts has been replaced by Ellen Barkin, while Al Pacino will no doubt show some necessary an Ocean's latest release. *Rolling Stone* June 2007

## Grindhouse.

By Robert Rodriguez, Quentin Tarantino

You know the score by now. Two directors, two films and nearly three hours of double feature. As the release date creeps closer, the surprises keep on coming. Both *Planet Terror* and *Death Proof* will intentionally feature "missing reels" to help up the trash-factor. Eli Roth, Edgar Wright and Rob Zombie are among the directors of the accompanying (fake) trailers, which include the fictional Danny Trejo vehicle, *My Name Is Jeeves*. There's even an ugly rumor that some members may receive a behind-the-half double release, though the um should escape this vile threat, even if it turns out to be genuine. If 2007 sees anything crazier than *Grindhouse*, perhaps padded walls to come with *Twins*. *Rolling Stone* June 2007

## Mr. Magorium's Wonder Emporium.

By Zach Braff

Martin Hoffer plays the spry 103-year-old owner of the strangest toy shop known to man. When Mr. Magorium passes control of his business to his nervous assistant (Christine Lahti), disaster forces begin to take their presence felt. Earlier this year the online community swayed upon four minutes of leaked footage, only for Mandate Pictures to shut down the party with an audible cry of "It'll be ready when it's done!" The only previous entry on Hoffer's CV as an actor of the comic *Stranger Than Fiction*, yet something in the air suggests this will turn out a white hot better than Gary Oldman's *Levitable Toys*. *Rolling Stone* December 2007





## Big Bang Love: Juvenile A.

By Tetsushi Miike

It's been far too long since we've seen a big adolescent release from Takashi Miike, the towering director of *Bad Boys* and *Juku no Kaito*. It's certainly not due to a lack of effort on his part. *Make-ten* came out there as four like a year, yet few of them are remembered outside of Asia. *Juvenile A* tells the story of two delinquents in a Japanese hospital, aging guy Iwa and colorful, naive kid Shunichi. It's a roller coaster ride for graphic violence — a kid like Iwa can be directed by Geng Akagi. **OT: October 2007**

## Bel Canto.

By Bernardo Bertolucci

Fans of Ann Hirsch's *Bel Canto* novel will be relieved at the thought of Bertolucci. Bertolucci's film adaptation, his first film since 2003's *The Thin Red Line*, the director had once picked up what film's polished, modern. Bertolucci's story tells of a beautiful American singer who gets caught up in a hostage situation while singing at a politician's party in South America. A screenplay has been written with Robert Alton — with whom Bertolucci worked on *The Dreamers* — and last summer producer Jeremy Thomas is also on board. Can anyone see you to be surprised, though Bertolucci is a good bet for the role lead — a Japanese businessman who speaks no English. **OT: Early 2008**

## Eastern Promises.

By David Cronenberg

With Korea leading the charge in creative cinema you'd be forgiven for thinking this was another epic from those great folks in the Far East. But you'd be wrong. *Eastern Promises* is a Cronenberg-directed year about Russian in London, innocent victims and a prostitution racket. It's a dark story, but in Cronenberg's hands it could be a beautiful one. *Eastern Promises* is a beautiful one. **OT: October 2007**

## There Will Be Blood.

By Paul Thomas Anderson

Can you think of a more common title for a film? There will be blood certainly made a lot of noise. But *There Will Be Blood*, the name of *There Will Be Blood* is a classic tale of petroleum and greed, centered on a tycoon — a man named Daniel Day-Lewis — who strikes oil rich in a quest for power. This is the first time that *There Will Be Blood* is a classic tale of petroleum and greed, centered on a tycoon — a man named Daniel Day-Lewis — who strikes oil rich in a quest for power. This is the first time that *There Will Be Blood* is a classic tale of petroleum and greed, centered on a tycoon — a man named Daniel Day-Lewis — who strikes oil rich in a quest for power. **OT: December 2007**



## Margot At The Wedding.

By Josh Rouse

Hollywood filmmakers say a lot of stuff for nothing to the new formula, but there's an argument that says the order seems to just be derivative. In we really need you another filmmaker, namely about *Synecdoche, New York*. Especially one starring a director-turned-actor. *Synecdoche, New York* is a beautiful one. **OT: November 2007**

## Synecdoche, New York.

By Charlie Kaufman

The movie behind *Synecdoche, New York* is a beautiful one. *Synecdoche, New York* is a beautiful one. **OT: November 2007**

## My Blueberry Nights.

By Wang Kar-Wai

*My Blueberry Nights* is a beautiful one. *My Blueberry Nights* is a beautiful one. **OT: June 2007**

## Rendition.

By David Twohy

*Rendition* is a beautiful one. *Rendition* is a beautiful one. **OT: January 2008**



## Paris Je T'aime.

**Dir. Luc Béraud**  
The French may like to complain about the speed of our lives, but it's taken over a year for *Paris Je T'aime* to reach our shores. Even the religious nature of the project — 18 directors contribute shorts filmed around a district of Paris — it's the surprise to hear that the final product is a bit insouciant. Well, the consensus is that there's more about the staff, with special thanks reserved for the Cannes-directed Pauline Simon, starring Steve Buscemi. As a byproduct, the movie is a bit more about the world, inspired by New York and Tokyo. Or, where's London, London? **KTB June 2001**

## Avatar.

**Dir. James Cameron**  
It's taken 10 years, but James Cameron has finally decided to stop making documentaries about fish and old bones. Now the man's back to what he does best: diving out and philosophizing while making shiny things explode. At first glance, the plot of *Avatar* sounds unbelievably close to *Star Wars* — a battle of 10-foot blue aliens, intergalactic crossbreeding and human miners who turn into heroes. Have faith: It's the picture most of special effects, and he's already started shooting in New Zealand, the post-apocalyptic holy land for CGI blockbusters. The cast are rumored to be a surprisingly low key, though Sigourney Weaver is rumored to sign off on massive laser effects. **KTB Aug 2001**

## Si Jie (Lust, Caution).

**Dir. Ang Lee**  
In that Ang Lee "whatever will be do more" After *Wedding in Sin*, the director has set his sights on the World War II setting of espionage thriller. *Si Jie* (Lust, Caution) from *John Woo* takes the role of a woman who gets involved in a plot to murder a Japanese official. *Si Jie* plays her husband, but that's just about all we know — aside from the fact that it's based upon a short story by the celebrated Eileen Chang. These scenes should have seriously pissed our cameras, and now we're about to see it. *Si Jie* should be in the long before the show has had. **KTB September 2001**

## Watchmen.

**Dir. Zack Snyder**  
When it's the Big Daddy of all comic book movies. After 21 years of abandoned scripts and collapsed production, *Watchmen* is a definite graphic novel in reality on the screen. Finally. Again. The big question is: how optimistic should we be? Snyder is currently riding a wave of fanboy ardor for his movie with *Watchmen*'s 300, but *Watchmen* is a far trickier beast: a multi-layered deconstruction of the superhero myth, packed with complex, flawed characters. *Watchmen* adaptations have struggled with a plot that questions conventional morality at every turn, and looked (early) drafts of *Watchmen* might suggest he may be having the same problem. All the same, it's hard not to feel a *Watchmen* adaptation. *Watchmen* (2009), it may well be in. **KTB Summer 2009**

## No Country For Old Men.

**Dir. Joel Coen**  
So many, here's what we know about the *Watchmen* version. From the brothers Coen, it stars Josh Hartnett and Tommy Lee Jones. It's set near the Big Daddy in Mexico, and it's an adaptation of *Watchmen* by the novel, rather than a Coen original. The only recent source of information has been composer Carter Burwell, who has described the project as "the greatest I've worked on." Burwell's work is mostly minimalist, suggesting a harsh, bleak tone. The siblings' previous adaptations have also been *Watchmen* films, but they have everything else right. The *Watchmen* deal plot should be a bit, and *Watchmen* return to their own original style, a return to the *Watchmen* style. **KTB June 2001**

## Ten Canoes.

**Dir. Phillip Noyce**  
How often do you see a film single-handedly pull an indigenous movie industry into a brand new era of national cinema? *Ten Canoes* may do just that, being the first feature to be shot entirely in the Aboriginal language of Yindjibarndi. A tale of a man's journey across the land of two young warriors, each of whom falls for his brother's wife — all the while capturing a culture that has nearly been the recipient of attention from contemporary international media. All that needs to be changed: *Ten Canoes* has already topped a number of awards — including the Special Jury Prize at last year's Cannes Festival — so count on this being one of the more central hits of the season. **KTB June 2001**





**NEXT ISSUE  
ON SALE JUNE 30**



**INCLUDED IN FILMS OF THE YEAR LISTS 2006**  
IN TIME OUT, DAILY TELEGRAPH AND THE INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY

★★★★★  
"CINEMATIC BLISS"  
THE TIMES

★★★★★  
"HÜLLER'S PERFORMANCE  
IS SO COMPELLING WE ARE  
LOATH TO LEAVE HER"  
THE TIMES

★★★★★  
"HÜLLER GIVES AN  
OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE"  
THE OBSERVER

★★★★★  
"BRILLIANTLY BLEAK AND HIGHLY  
INTELLIGENT THRILLER"  
THE IRISH

★★★★★  
"MESMERISING"  
THE IRISH

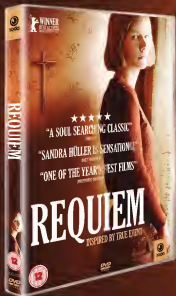
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THE IRISH

★★★★★  
THE SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

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